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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM.
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

THE POETRY REVIEW

First Published (as *The Poetical Gazette*) May, 1909

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VOLUME XLIV

1953
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"Where there is no vision the people perish"

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TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A stamped and self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least a month has elapsed. A decision may take longer.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

NEXT ISSUE—

A New Poem by

LOUIS MacNEICE

and Details of another

NEW PRIZE COMPETITION

Open to all Poets

These pages—An offering to

CARL SANDBURG

"Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on."

Prelude . . .

CHRISTMAS—AND A GOLDEN SCROLL

Christmas for poets and the friends of poetry has a special significance, rather different from that of the market-place. But the difference need not be emphasized here, although it is indicated in modern verse as confidently as ever it was by the poets of old time —

When Love on Earth set up His rest
Within a safe and secret place,
His stronghold was a Virgin's breast,
His light her stooping face.

Laurence Housman began a twentieth-century "Carol" with those lines; but in another Christmas lyric of our day, Frances Chesterton, poet-wife of "G.K.C.", made a declaration of faith to which even the unimaginative celebrant of December the Twenty-Fifth can subscribe: "How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far."

And that is why "the old, old wish", as Charles Dickens called it, for every member of The Poetry Society and each reader of *The Poetry Review* comes instinctively to the editorial pen — a Happy Christmas! Coupled with it is a message for the New Year, forthright and confident: Truth, Goodness, Beauty — Goethe's great trilogy — these will prevail.

* * *

"I cannot let Christmas come without sending you my love and greetings. I love Christmas . . . In that other world where wishes are laws, there would be a great shining wreath of holly on the door-knocker, lights at all the windows, and a real party going on inside. We meet in the hall and warmly re-clasp hands. Good Heavens! *I'm* not above a tree, coloured candles and crackers — are you?"

The quotation is from a letter by Katherine Mansfield, long ago, to the Chairman of the Editorial Board. Katherine Mansfield was not only a short story writer of great distinction — she and A. E. Coppard, who contributes to this number, were outstanding in their art between the wars

— she, like "A.E.C.," was a poet. A poet's Christmas is a human Christmas too.

* * *

In the autumn number of *The Poetry Review* we introduced a feature which it will be our privilege to continue on the opening page of each issue — The Poetry Society's tribute to a poet of the English-speaking countries whose work, life-long, has gained him fame and honour.

The name of Walter de la Mare was the first to be inscribed on what we wish readers to regard as a Golden Scroll of Modern Poets, and following it in this issue is that of Carl Sandburg.

In a preface to Sandburg's poetry the English critic, Rebecca West, made a claim for the seventy-four years-old American author of many books since 1915 which will not be disputed: "He is, like Robert Burns, a national poet."

Sandburg's nation is "an over-prosperous America", which, says Miss West, will become "the essential America when this phase of commercial expansion is past and the New World is cut down to the quick as the Old World is to-day". His home is "an incredible city named Chicago", and "Smoke and Steel" is his best-known work.

Carl Sandburg's story of his life will be published in January with the title *Always the Young Strangers*.

* * *

The formation of the Editorial Board which began work in the October-December number of this periodical is being celebrated by two new Poetry Awards. One of them has been introduced as a tribute to a Scottish poet of our time with a special appeal for Scottish poets and readers. The name of the poet is Elizabeth Bowes Lyon, who died three years ago.

Details of the competition are given on another page. For the other prize we thank the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and himself a distinguished man of letters. Details will be announced in the next issue.

* * *

It has not been possible to hold the International Children's Book Exhibition at the time announced in our last number.

The Poetry Society were making preparations to sponsor it at 33 Portman Square when a postponement until next year was requested from Germany, where the idea originated. News of the rearrangement will be published later.

* * *

A London newspaper, *The Evening News*, recently printed what was proudly announced as a poem. We do not presume to challenge such a claim for an ambitious piece of work which, adorned by the author's portrait, was spread over two long columns — 144 lines, including

"And the sergeant, whose shift should have ended at three, Suggested he made her a strong cup of tea". We only make the comment that it took us nostalgically back to the good old days of George R. Sims and (whether Sims wrote this one or not) "Christmas Day at the Workhouse".

Thank you, John Arlott, although it would be sad if a million readers took your "Death on the Road" as their idea of what poetry is :

> We may pity Jones less for his death on the road
> Than the far too brief time that he had to unload
> His burden of moral and venial sin
> As the bonnet went down and the engine came in.

* * *

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Edward H. W. Meyerstein, poet, novelist, critic, and a member of the Society; and also of Wilfred Rowland Childe, poet, one of our occasional contributors who was Dean of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Leeds.

Mr. Meyerstein's appearance at The Poetry Society rooms among the poets who read their own work will be recalled. He lived just long enough to see the publication of his seventh novel, *Tom Tallion*, after correcting the proofs. An unhappy circumstance attended this work, which we must refer to if only as an ironical warning to critics.

A reviewer in a rather supercilious weekly journal — he shall be nameless although he signed the review — took Mr. Victor Gollancz, the publisher of *Tom Tallion*, to task for his claim on the dust-cover that Meyerstein has "long been regarded by connoisseurs as one of the wittiest and most urbane novelists of the day."

The reviewer's comment was: "I must confess that I am proved no connoisseur, since this is the first time I have heard of the existence of E. H. W. Meyerstein." Within a few days *The Times* printed a whole half-column obituary of Mr. Meyerstein, giving the reminder that he was not only the author of twenty-three books but that among them was the best of all biographies of the boy-poet Chatterton!

* * *

The members of the Editorial Board desire to give thanks for the many expressions of praise, criticism and, in any case, goodwill received since they multiplied the editorial chair by eight.

One correspondent wrote from the U.S.A.: "I have taken new heart." Boston Centre, U.S.A., have mailed the Society a surprise money gift . . . Quoting from ourselves, in concluding these notes, let it be remembered that: "We welcome any attempt to extend the frontiers of poetry provided it is genuine, just as we smile if it is merely bogus."

And so, when Christmas is over — a Happy New Year!

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

IN HOKKAIDO:

A Letter in Verse, and in the Romantic manner.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Lover of solitude and those wild tracks
Which constantly allure time's wanderers
To deep and singular peace, for you I paint —
Though in dim outline, in weak hue — this chasm
Of river and mountain; not that so I hide
My inner solitude, or murmur less
That what I sketch you are not here to seize
More swiftly, and with amplitude beyond
The essays and flights of any words of mine.

Above the voiceless woods pale Evening came,
Dense woods arraying cliffs which might in dream
Turn castle-walls. Embattled even as those
The ridge of stone stared through the deep green veil,
And no man-fashioned castle rose in mind
To challenge that, where Evening spread her clouds
Of cobweb dusk, suddenly seen afloat
Above dark treetops in long ledges, some
Arisen from the unseen stream past the great mass:
Strange shapes and changeful. Vaporous as they were,
Fear might be so endued to haunt bright day;
And there was thunder, but from where none knew,
Save that the river-thunder answered on.

Morning at last opened the sky, blue sky
With sunshine and a flying gladness, calling
Travellers even in creviced nooks to speed
For joy; the river called; and all obeyed.
Even I, who setting forth was not yet free
Of burdening apprehensions brought in dreams,
Part of the world's sad echoes, part my own,
Was on the wing; and now the hoof-marked lane
Was winding by the splashing, tumbling river
And rocks that roundly topped its cold loud force,
And sundering groves of weeds in summer pride,
Outswelling leaves, green tables-round; fond tufts
Of flowers that elsewhere might be meadow-sweet,

And high half-thistle on whose purple tower
Streaked butterflies were landing. Deep the road
Worked through this chaos green, and I recalled
Green byways of a summer dead, and one —
War was upon that way in northern France,
Between the halted railroad and the wood;
War met the wayfarer, who still would fancy
That sanctuary held in that graceful wood,
That sacrificial grove.

Far thence our path
Parted the Eastern thickets, and disclosed
The chasm updriving, lifting forest green,
And life and death of trees, — the dead yet stood,
Spines and white elbows; others in the stream
As skeletons took part in their own dirge.

Whence, see! the blanching plunge of the waterfall
From heights beside the moon whose silver bow
Delightful holds that part of heaven in spell.
Dear sign, if night it were and you were come
To do her reverence, long the night should be
And sorrowless; but even here the tread
Of mortal time would hunt us, and its voice
Outmurmur careless bubbles, whispering leaves.
The slender stream dives far, its beauty takes
Child-eyes a moment, consummates the thought
Of labourers for the word of wonder; alighting,
It hides in shattered rock and woven boughs,
And the fair marvel springing from that heaven
In puny drops goes trickling to the pool,
As sometimes lives once passionate find their close,
Bright arcs of fame and venture, then the unsung.
Yet new cascades are shining, the tall ghost
Walks the next height, the Milky Way by name,
So broad, so white its shape from high to low,
With stems of light entwined, unshaken, hovering
Where the black gulf descends.

And from these rocks
Let fancy work whatever forms she will;
At once the statued saint exalted stands,
Next where a furnace flames, a demon sneers,

Chimeras eye the gods. Above our heads
The monstrous shafted rockiness now curves,
Here bare and tottering, there so clad in shrub
And tree, Plantation-cliff might this be called.
And trees in gardens lack the green of those
Whose nurse is a grey witch of hungry stone.
There like a star, and there, a lily glows
With mountain-life, asking no breast but hers.

You have seen Dovedale; there are shapes even here,
Gleams, twilights, to recall it; there perhaps
This instant such a sky roofs such a valley,
And questions magnitudes; but Dovedale's song
Is sweeter. From these vaster stones unwondering
We should hear iron shrieks of unnamed birds,
Whose shadows rushing by might chill the blood.
But now instead across the clamour of streams
Come bird-voices beloved, and where the crag
Seems ever pouring down in molten floods,
Stopt short at ledge and cavern, happily
The martins nestle; white their breasts outshine
The twinkling leaves below their circling flight.
Their thorpe it is, their peace, though every way
Lours desolation. From their home the mind
Turns to the river and the rounded stone
Where by his whirlpool too the wagtail plies
His wakefulness and nimbleness, and moths
Lacquered and dappled sun on hugest leaves;
And yet the mind obeys another call,
And backward glances own the influence; who
With other messages fills the ravine?
Westward what trinity of peaks ascends and makes
These precipices its toys? what unguessed range
Of forest, furred and badged with sacred snow?

HANSOM CABBIES

WILFRID THORLEY

When I was a lad there were hansoms in London,
With drivers on top of a little back stair
And horses that ran under silver-tipt harness
Or stood by the kerb-stone awaiting a fare,
And tossed in the air
Their nose-bags of corn for the sparrows to share.

And sometimes in Spring when the nose-bags were leaking,
And sparrows were loud amid loot of spilt corn,
Old Cabby reached over the slender Park railings
And stole a rosette of the double red thorn
His mare to adorn,
With "Fares may be few, but we won't be forlorn".

The spokes they were pointed with red and with yellow;
The brass was like gold where the reins threaded through;
There was sometimes a crest on the old leather blinkers,
A crown on the horse-cloth of crimson and blue
That said "It's for you
We're waiting, my Lord, and a crown is our due".

Now where are they gone to, the weather-worn cabbies
That drove us alertly through all the dense shoals
That filled the strait Fleet from St. Paul's to St. Martin's,
Or over the bridge where big Benjamin tolls?
O! somewhere their souls
Still murmur "Where to, Sir?" through tiny peep-holes.

Elysian fields show them pasturing fillies
Sure-footed and shapely — just built for a yoke;
They comb their silk manes and they wheedle and drive them
Down roads without mud where the fogs never choke,
And rain's a rare joke
To cheerful night-watchmen with cressets of coke.

The fares that they find there are born in the purple;
Their talk is of Dizzy and Toole and Bend Or;
Their manners are suave and their tips are all golden;
They dwell between Mayfair and Kensington Gore;
And flunkeys galore
Poll-powdered, receive them at Paradise door.

LETTER

GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Publish no word of this, except in your own heart.
The chronicle of love is a music sweeter than horns from
Caerleon, yet no testament is more apocryphal.
Therefore, whatever it is in me that kindles or is quenched at
the mere rumour of your approach:
the avowals aid concealments,
the misgivings and transports,
the stratagems and enchantments —
accept wholly or in part as true, or reject utterly as
without logic, foundation or certitude.
As though a madman were to cry out in the night and discover
God in the intervals of his delirium.

MOZART'S "LINZ" SYMPHONY

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

All is secure. The Hapsburg on his throne;
From silver sconces waxen candles cast
The only shadows, falling on damask walls.
Civilized music, disciplined, serene
Breathes from the oboe, from the muted horn,
And the remote fifes, like the threat of war,
Still leaving the heart untouched, and no one knows
That over green fields ten thousand march to die,

Yet in that soil the seeds we reap were sown,
Under the discipline spread that corrosion
That gnaws our conscience; derelict farm and village,
Sacked church and pillaged cloister, a country ravaged
By centuries of robbery and war.
Under its civilized disguise the heart
Breaking to know man's old misuse of man,
Speaks in the hollow voices of the horns,

And, in the flutes, children who cry and pull
At the skirt of a woman fretful and complaining;
Europe sickening, and Vienna starving,
And, a few years ahead, the pauper's grave.
Yet, for our comfort, in years that bring no comfort
The music, as brittle and silver as sunlight, wrung
From the still pause, the trembling brink of storms,
Holds a man's courage and immortality.

VALE

A. E. COPPARD

For many a year in Oxfordshire
I lived and worked for wages;
Married a wife and read of life
In some few thousand pages;
Now, all alone, I gird and moan
With manifest impiety
Because my limp career has shown
So little of variety!

Life's pleasures shed when all is said
But thin and vagrant features,
I was no clerk to hit the mark
Of sore task-grinding teachers,
Time has pursued with chidings rude
My fine concerns but, dammit, he
Did ne'er pretend some better end,
So that's no great calamity.

Some queer last day in Essex clay
My bones must make a lodgment
Despite of care and wind and wear
To wait the ironic judgment;
For seven pounds ten some blackcoat men
Will heave me up and carry me
A mile and some towards Kingdom Come
And there, unweeping, bury me.

UBIQUITOUS AMBUSH

S. A. HAMILTON

A shadow held in sculptured foot,
A child's interrogating smile,
A cherry stone that made a root
Have chased the centuries awhile.

Unfelt the press of weariness,
Inexorable weight of time,
In everpresent joyfulness
I'm free, I live, I see, I rime.

POET INTO NOVELIST

By LOUIS GOLDING

There was a time when I wrote nothing but poems. (I would more modestly call them verses now). To-day I write nothing but prose, which usually takes the shape of novels.

Now the same thing has happened to a great many writers. Why? I would like briefly to examine the situation, using myself as a guinea-pig, because I happen to be the writer whom I know most about.

I did not lisp in numbers, for I inherited from my father a clear articulation. He was a sacerdotal orator by profession, as well as a teacher, and I inherited from him also an almost ecstatic love of the Word for its own sake. The Word — the word is used not so much theologically as physiologically — meant almost the same thing to me written or spoken. I still do not see it without simultaneously hearing it. When I heard my father orating in dusking synagogues on Sabbath evenings, in a voice which still remains to me the loveliest, the most bell-like, of all remembered voices, despite our protracted internecine war, the words took shape before my five-year-old eyes. They were jets of water, they were stalks of grass, they were heavy paving-stones.

I composed a poem not long after that, for it was inevitable I should soon be playing about with words on my own account. It was a good poem, spontaneous in feeling, revolutionary in technique, and it had actuality. It went:

He got a big smack
And said he'd go back
To school
— The fool!

I was proud of that poem. So was my mother. My father was indifferent to it. I am not sure whether I could read or write yet. It was carried about in my head as the minstrel carried his lays.

My first written poem was very literary and definitely inferior. It ran like this:

Alone I walked, I walked alone.
My twitt'ring bird on high I heeded not.
I heeded not my flower pompous grown,
And at my twitt'ring little brook,
I gazed not nor e'en gave a look
Of fondling . . .

The spelling must have been less exact, but I have lost the original manuscript.

I sometimes wonder whether it was the intractability of that poem which made me subconsciously aware that prose is a less arduous vocation than poetry.

First of all, there was the line "I gazed not nor e'en gave a look . . ." It was as odious to look at as to listen to. I tried to adapt it in one way and another, but it remained obdurate. Further, the poem stopped without coming to an end. It could not continue itself. I beat my head against a stone wall suspended in mid-air.

Some time after, my sister Janey, peace be upon her, read me aloud a poem by another writer. It was called "The May Queen". That shook my poetic complacency along two lines of attack. In the first place I realized it was exceedingly difficult to achieve such fluency and flexibility. In the second place, it made me cry my eyes out. I despised myself. I said: if that is the effect of poetry, I've finished with it.

I shall be a fireman or a prime minister or milkman, but I shall not be a poet.

But I still went on writing poems, for still I was much more interested in my own joys and sorrows than in other people's. Night after night, for long hours after midnight, to the crepitation of black-beetles between the wall and the wall-paper, I wrote long labial melancholy poems. I share a vanity common to most writers. I, too, am convinced that no poems since the invention of writing were as bad as my early love-poems. They were all about maidens called Laremia, Lenoria, Loramia. Loramia was a frequent maiden.

Loramia was a winsome maiden
Loramia was my bride.
She left me for a stranger's smile
And she crossed the ocean wide
— Loramia, cruel, cruel!

By this time I had won a scholarship to the Manchester Grammar School. I remember a forlorn attempt to publish a volume of poems in collaboration with the first of my literary friends. I remember the exquisitely tactful way in which my beloved High Master tackled the situation. He made the agony of the failure just bearable. I was driven into a poetry more mournful and horrific than before:

Zarda's plains are stained, alas!
Woe betide, ah woe betide!
Green before, now red the grass!
Ah! Woe betide!

It went on like that for a good many stanzas, with the substitution for "Woe betide", of "Lackaday", "Welladay", and "Woe is me". Woe was me for quite a long time to come, till the High Master induced

the editor of *Ulula*, the school magazine, to print a poem by a writer who somewhat crudely disguised his identity under the pen-name "Gholedynge". I ran home from school that day carolling blithely, waving the little blue sheet like a banner. My mother gave me a dish of whinberries in sour cream. She was proud of her small poet.

In a very real sense that was the climax of my career as a poet. In later years I was to achieve a number of honours in poetry, which I was to be very proud of. On several occasions the Chairman of the Editorial Board of this journal included me in his "Best Poems of the Year". In America they even issued a "Collected Edition" of my poems, a distinction which has not come to many far better poets than I am.

But that was my great day as a poet, the day I ran home to my mother, waving my first printed poem. And my crown of wild parsley was a dish of whinberries and cream.

The years went by. The horizons widened. I went from school to Oxford, and the war carried me from the river Irwell to the Nile and the Struma, from Manchester Town Hall to the Acropolis and the Pyramids. I became far less interested than I had been in whether I loved Loramia or Loramia loved me. At all events I became less exhibitionistic about it, less solipsistic (as the philosophers say). If I wrote about my own affairs, which I rarely did after my first novel, I called myself Bill Bloggins, and I called Loramia, Sophie Briggs.

I became far more interested in other people than in myself. I mean, of course, as *literary material*. Still, as an actual experience, I was more interested in my own toothache than in the toothache of my best friend. But I repeat. That was experience on another plane of reality.

Is it to be deduced from what I have written that I consider those poets who have remained predominantly poets throughout the whole of their dedicated lives — that I consider the Yeatses and the de la Mares self-engrossed introverts interested in no other thoughts, no other passions, no other delights, than their own?

No. Ten times no. For the poet born to be a poet and not a teller of tales soon gets through this purely biological phase of self-absorption. By his twenty-third year he is already beginning to worry about how little he has added to the sum of truth. As the decades go by he gets closer and closer to the heart of the mystery. He is not interested in Loramia, in Marmion, or in Manfred. He is interested, not in stratagems and spoils, but in communions and intuitions, not in his own emotions but the emotions of all men. He is not the narrator but the interpreter. He is the bridge between the ephemeral and the light that always was on sea or land, and always will be.

COCKTAIL HOUR

PHOEBE HESKETH

The muddied day is dredged by alcohol
Into a bowl of light.
This is the hour light filters through life's cup;
And dregs are banished from our dazzled sight.
We savour beauty with a sensuous lip
Till sip by sip
The dusty mouthful of our daily bread
Is spirited away in fume of dreams.

The bitter aloe of frustration seems
Sweet on the palate of uplifted sense.
Since gin unwinds each closely-woven thought
Turning the hidden fabric inside out,
Can we, grown sober, wear the coloured coat
Pattern towards the sun,
And see the substance of our vision shine
Beyond the midden of our drudgery?
Corn from a dunghill? Stars through domes of doubt?
The light burns on though dreams must flicker out.

Like Atlas bowed below his solid globe
We stoop beneath our shadow-world of care,
Yet shade implies the sun — this is the hour
When light absorbs despair
And shrinks the crooked shades that clutch the flower
Struggling in the crevice of belief.
This cocktail stick pricks through a cherry sun
And bursts the trouble-bubble we have blown.

INDIA

MICHAEL HARDWICK

The stars gleam chilly in the winter sky;
  The moon hangs frozen, ice is on the stream;
And lamps are lit where luckier men than I
  Close huddle to bright-burning fires, and dream.

They sigh, and long for lands they have not known,
  Where nights are warm and water does not freeze;
While here I lie, and sweat and turn and groan,
  And pray to God to send a little breeze.

SALUTE TO M. JEAN ANOUILH

WRENNE JARMAN

In the dark stalls your audience, with rapt eye
  Watching your fantasies in rose, in black,
  Follow your lovers down to hell and back,
More tranced for knowing they must part or die.
Larger than life and nobler, these defy
  The kindly Fate that couples Jill with Jack:
  They choose renunciation and the rack
Before the shameful truce, the social lie.

Though your corrupting satyrs, dressed to kill,
  Your ospreyed dowagers dripping cynicism,
    Your armament kings with only cash to spend,
Curvet like circus ponies — you are still
  The boy who loves the lights within the prism,
    Who stands enraptured at the rainbow's end.

AFTERWARDS

MURIEL AGNES ARBER

How easy it would be if you had died.
Then I could ponder all my memories,
Feeling the timeless Then eternal Now.
Those moments, when faith quickened to a glow
Burning away all bounds of time and space,
Would smoulder still; their fire would warm me yet.
Now I could fancy all that you would feel
Had you not died. I could live doubly now,
My life and yours in one, seen through my eyes.
But you are still alive, though inner fate
Has forced our paths apart and I shall never
See you again. You breathe and think and feel
This instant moment, and I cannot tell
What passes through your mind; I only know
Whatever life you have now is not mine.
I have no part therein. I cannot live
Dreaming that all the past continues yet,
Eternal, when I know it all is dead
Within your life. I cannot now live double
In false imagination of a truth.
It would have been so easy had you died.

"CHILDREN OF A NAUGHTY AGE"

A Reply to Lord Dunsany

By F. PRATT GREEN*

There is plenty of room, I am officially assured, in the Poetry Society and in *The Poetry Review*, to the left of Lord Dunsany. This encourages me to step up to his lordship and to take him to task for his diverting article on modern poetry in our last issue.

Those quotations! I gladly confess I whispered to myself "Ah, that's So-and-So!" and rocked with laughter at the neat trick. Bernard Shaw is said to have bamboozled a Shakespearian society in the same way when making a speech at their annual dinner. But wit is not always wisdom. When the laughter dies down, then the small voice of reason pipes up.

The title of Lord Dunsany's article was a lost opportunity. "Dunsany Canes the Moderns" would have suited its tone much better than the rather lugubrious "The Fall of the Muses". But did you notice that his lordship was most careful not to name any bad boy for corporal punishment? No, no, not one of these delinquents! Was it kindness? Or was it caution? How much safer to chastise a purely representative and imaginary bottom than to risk saying, "Come out, Eliot!" or "Hold your hand out, Thomas!" or "Bend over, Barker!" No doubt the naughty moderns have suffered agonies of conscience, if they attended to his lordship's words.

But let us be fair. Lord Dunsany tells us that he "set out not to criticize any modern verse but to attempt to account for its acceptance; and to do this is very difficult." Of course it is! It is as difficult as to make any impression on an imaginary object. For what is this modern poetry which is so totally and engagingly condemned? Evidently it is poetry which suffers from lack of rhyme, rhythm, and respectability! Accepting this as a make-shift definition, has such poetry won wide acceptance anywhere? One is usually told that no one reads poetry now because the moderns have killed it. It is all very puzzling.

The complaint of his lordship seems to be that the moderns have trapped a considerable audience! Or is he referring to acceptance by critics? Why does he not come out with it and ask plainly (if this is his meaning): how can we account for the vogue of the concealed Victorian priest, Gerard Manley Hopkins? or of T. S. Eliot? or the steadily rising reputation of Edith Sitwell? or the extraordinary influence of that incoherent fellow Dylan Thomas? or the intrusion of George Barker into middlebrow anthologies? Or has Lord Dunsany in mind the more extreme

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modernists? Ezra Pound, perhaps? or E. E. Cummings? or even naughtier boys in the poetry class? Or is he thinking of the lesser fry who imitate them?

When the laughter has died down, does not reason warn us that Lord Dunsany's generalizations throw little light on anything except the state of his own mind and the strength of his own emotions? His case will only impress those who are already disposed to echo denunciations of something called modern poetry. Surely it would be wiser to look fairly at the issues involved in this age-long controversy. For let us remember that even the respectable Wordsworth was dunsanied in his time!

The truth is that poetry, like many other things, is apt to get into a rut. It loses its freshness and vitality, becomes exhausted in its efforts to emulate the great poets of the immediate past, grows as conventional as the furled umbrella of the city clerk. This happened at the close of the glorious Victorian age. By all means chastise those who foolishly decry Tennyson (whose early poetry was much too modern!) or Browning (that naughty boy of the mid-Victorian period!) or even Swinburne (shockingly obscene, they said!), but confess that a decline is evident in the poetry of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, despite the virtues of poets so different as Robert Bridges and Rudyard Kipling. Even a young man called W. B. Yeats is writing languidly of the blessed spirits . . . The rut was no less deep because it was charmingly scented.

We can see quite clearly now that the poets we oddly describe as the Georgians were eager to get out of the rut. They regarded nature and man with a welcome simplicity of heart, reflected in a delightful simplicity of style. W. H. Davies lit his companionable pipe and took a fresh look at the English countryside; Edmund Blunden looked more deeply into it. So there grew up a colony of honest poets whose verse we could understand and which will be enjoyed (are we not striving to be fair?) when some of these naughty moderns only survive as curiosities of literature. What the Georgians lacked, surely, was creative genius. They were pleasant poets, well within the tradition; they did not enrich the tradition by any original contribution in what they said or in how, as poets, they said it. And is not this what T. S. Eliot, to name one modern, indisputably possesses?

Lord Dunsany's naughty boy is the child of a naughty age. A catastrophic age like ours, with its scientific experimentation and its spiritual uncertainty, with its frustrations and enthusiasms, with its exploration of the deeper levels of human consciousness and its violent wrestling with sociological and economic problems, is bound to express its disturbance in its art. Perhaps Lord Dunsany thinks the poet should sit above the sordid world and meditate upon the eternal verities. Doubtless some poets are commissioned by the Muses to do this! Some people have the

gift of being able to live through revolutions as though they never happened. But has his lordship any right to dismiss the kind of poetry which in form and in content expresses the unhappy spirit of our age? May it not be that some of the poets he condemns, though they may go to extremes like all revolutionaries, will make their own lasting contribution to a developing (and not a dead) tradition?

I would plead for a very different attitude than his lordship's. I would simply ask that each poem be considered as a poem, and not as a pawn in the bitter game of party poetics. Let us say, as we read it: "here is a poem, it may be traditional, it may be modern; it may be in a regular rhythm we like, or in speech rhythm we need to get used to; it may be rhymed, unrhymed, or even eccentrically half-rhymed or falsely-rhymed; it may be about a pleasant or an unpleasant subject; it may be simple to understand, or difficult to understand, or even obscure; it may be happy in tone or bitter; it may be by a nice respectable poet or by one of those naughty moderns: *But I am going to give the poem a chance to speak for itself!*" We may find that an eccentric poem by E. E. Cummings strangely "comes off", and that an obscure poem by Dylan Thomas strangely moves us, and that the study we give to the redoubtable T. S. Eliot is an enriching experience.

There are tests. Does the poem "come off"? Was it worth the "coming off"? Is it well done? Was it worth doing at all? And there is always one final warning. It is wise, in the presence of art as in the presence of God, to be humble, with the humility which knows that we are not the final judges of the worth of anything. The best judges of modern poetry are not yet born!

Let us take to heart the wise words of our President, Thomas Moult, in his first editorial: "Much damage has been and is still being done to Poetry by the antagonism of Left against Right and of Right against Left . . . We welcome any attempt to extend the frontiers of poetry provided it is genuine . . . Let the verse be truly felt and really written, and it has artistic integrity in the most self-exacting sense."

Shake hands on this, Lord Dunsany!

THE FALL OF THE MUSES

"They Beg To Differ"

In verse as well as prose the reactions of our readers to Lord Dunsany's contribution in the October–December issue on "The Fall of the Muses" have been made known to the Editorial Staff.

"Does the method pique" — the method being the so-called modernist, and the challenge is to Lord Dunsany —

> So that with ridicule you seek
> to be a false Canute, against expression's tide?

This quotation is from a rhymed letter which is too long to print in its entirety, and there are others. Neither verse nor prose, however, is all in favour of the article or against it. And following the rejoinder to Lord Dunsany by the President of the Brighton and Hove Centre we give a selection of fragments from the many letters in which writers have taken sides wholeheartedly.

First of all, though, and in case the attitude of *The Poetry Review* is being misjudged, two sentences may helpfully be taken from the editorial declaration ("Accent on Beauty") printed in the same issue as the article which has aroused so much controversy: "There is no reason why experiments should not be made," and: "Let the verse be truly felt and really written, and it has artistic integrity in the most self-exacting sense."

PRAISE

One cannot refrain from congratulating you. The "Prelude" article, taken side by side with Lord Dunsany's contribution, contains all the promise necessary that the *Review* is to be widely sympathetic but wisely discriminating in the matter of "advanced" modern verse. No easy task! — the Royal Academy Selection Board have the same problem once a year! With every good wish —

Surrey. DAVID C. POLDEN

CHALLENGE

How can it be expected that in these years when violent death is a commonplace, when fear and suspicion, hatred and fatalism, are dominating every one of us since the Comic Strip and the Iron Heel began to spread the world over — how can we expect our poets to sing of lovely and happy things in lovely and happy words? The Spirit of the Age, the Age of Anxiety, says we can't!

Glasgow. JOHN SPICER

DELIGHT

I was delighted to receive the latest issue of *The Poetry Review*. In particular, the contributions of Lord Dunsany and yourself imparted to it the character of a manifesto against the dull pretentiousness which has too long been stifling the healthy progress of English poetry, and which you have now taken an effective step to discredit.

London, W.2. PAUL SELVER

DISAPPROVAL

Surely it is agreed by all reasonable people that a great deal of modern poetry is unpoetical and valueless nonsense; but it is also true that a great deal of the output of the preceding centuries also falls into this category.

In Lord Dunsany's own words, "there have not been more than three

or four poets in any generation." It is therefore unlikely that posterity will judge our age on the sterile, windy output of the majority of so-called modern poets; but if the age were to be judged by the work of Dylan Thomas, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and Dr. Edith Sitwell, there is little to be feared from comparison with any previous generation.

May I venture to suggest that Lord Dunsany's thesis could have been taken more seriously if the examples quoted had been selected from the best modern poets. After all, we do not judge Shakespeare or Milton on the work of their parodists — however competent.

London, N.19. ALICE REDDIHOUGH

CONGRATULATIONS

As a member, minor poet, book-reviewer in *Poetry Review* and other journals, fence-sitter (permanent), and a friend both of the late editor and of most of your good selves, I am writing to say how encouraged I have been by the first number of the magazine to appear under the aegis of the New Regime. If Lord Dunsany's article in any way expresses the mood and intentions of those concerned with the selection of contributions, *Poetry Review* will continue its eventful life as a lone platform for, and pillar of, all that is best in modern (not modernist) poetry. Please don't be misled by personalities, especially the snobbish, the pompous, and the clique-addicted, even if so traditional that their every adjective sounds the knell across the red-brick wastes of Outer London.

How about a series of thoroughly "regressive", "archaic", incontrovertible articles along the lines of "Poets and Pretenders"? Apart from the cosy feeling inseparable from baiting modernism, they would be an aid to any necessary reorientation among those who have tried not to move with the times, but may be feeling slightly battered by the waves of "progress".

I think I had better sign this letter as one who hopes to be, for a long while to come

A CONSTANT READER

WOE, WOE!

Lord Dunsany has difficulty in accounting for the acceptance of modern verse — but is this stranger than the acceptance of the rest of modern art?

We are becoming trained to admire deformity through the rubbish cult of to-day, inaugurated for us by those who make a living by it—easy or not as the case may be. If the damage was material and could be seen or touched, people would be up in arms, but it is insidious, and therefore allowed to perpetuate itself by contact and habit.

Are we becoming a nation of deformed, frustrated children — something under six years old? Are the artists of to-day those who would really like to be playing at the crimes of Saturday morning pictures, tying up old men, slapping out the pistols, uprooting chairs and tables, rigged

out in cowboy kit? Naturally poetry will not lend itself to these things, but if this is all there is in our heads to write about, the music, poetry, and painting of to-day are possibly explained! We are not understood because we do not want to be, so we string words together, we dabble in paint, we make any sort of noise provided it jars.

Surrey. OLIVE RIVERS

WASHING DAY

SHEILA M. CREGEEN

The backs of bright stone houses greet
Those of the numbers opposite
Across a little cobbled street;
And when the clothes-lines hang between
They all by friendly bridges meet.

O then we see a festive sight:
For on the wind the green elms sway,
And in the sun the lane is white,
And the roofs change from violet
To grey or gold in moving light.

Who would believe the giddy pace
Of sober linen when it's out!
That cannot be a pillow-case
Between the stockings and the sheets
Performing with such gypsy grace?

O never hitherto did I
Suspect that useful underwear
Should cherish this desire to fly!
Alas, that pegs must so restrain
An ardour panting for the sky.

Pale shirts, discreetly striped, we see
Amongst the collars and the socks
Setting the pace for revelry;
I bless the British housewife who
Arranges for the weekly spree.

Now rosy-armed she comes to mow
The ripened harvest of the tub,
And bare as when the corn's laid low
In harvest field, the lane is now;
The wind plays on, the dancers go.

"THE MARVELLOUS BOY"

By STUART HOLROYD

Oh Chatterton! how very sad thy fate!
Dear child of sorrow — son of misery,
How soon the film of death obscured that eye
Whence genius mildly flashed, and high debate.

KEATS

Two hundred years ago, on the twenty-second of October, 1752, there was born in the already ancient city of Bristol one of the most remarkable geniuses our literature has ever known. There is none in the whole history of literature, except perhaps Tasso, who can rival him as a child prodigy. Were it not for the abortive nature of a draught of arsenic taken in desperation in his eighteenth year Thomas Chatterton would now be a name familiar to every schoolboy and beloved by every lover of poetry. But he lies in his grave, and we find his works relegated to 'reserve stock' in our libraries. What a monument to the irony of Time is that poor burial-place! one who began in such blazing clouds of poetic glory is obscured by the clouds of dust which have accumulated upon his volumes.

His life was transient as the meadow flower,
Ripened in ages, withered in an hour.

These are his own words; beautiful, pathetic words, true poetry. And there is no doubt at all that he wrote some great poetry in his few years of life. The two large volumes which contain his works are evidence of the amazing facility with which poetry must have flowed from his brain; and, except for a few lapses into bathos, a high poetical standard is sustained.

His most famous productions — and deservedly so — are the "Rowley poems". These forgeries, the supposed work of a fictitious fifteenth-century monk, have caused considerable controversy down the years. In the light of modern scholarship, however, it is quite obvious that they could be the work of no one but Chatterton. But the very fact that they could be mistaken for the mature work of a man of genius is proof of their quality. They are Chatterton's real contribution to our literature — the rest of his work is negligible in comparison — and since Time and Death render all things equal we must cease to think of the miracles he might have performed, and by contemplating the Rowley poems, finally judge his stature and assign him to his rightful place on the Parnassian mount.

To do this we must stand him alongside the acknowledged great and discover, if we can, how much of their mature greatness he shared. One thing must be understood at the outset: the Rowley cycle, taken as a

whole, is a living *experience* for the reader, just as *The Canterbury Tales, The Faerie Queen, Paradise Lost, The Divine Comedy, Endymion,* a Beethoven symphony or a Shakespeare play are experiences, and this is the quality which alone distinguishes a work of art as great literature.

Chatterton was essentially a Romantic poet, even though he lived in an age when poetry was a weapon in the political arena, and although he died eighteen years before the publication of the "*Lyrical Ballads*" heralded the Romantic Revival. I can give no authority to support this hypothesis, but is it not possible that he created Rowley in order to cast off the cumbersome shackles of his age, and to allow his romantic genius to blossom unrestrainedly in an earlier period — one which stimulated his creative power far more than the seemingly dull world around him?

The miracles of Nature — the changing seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, the songs of birds and the music of mountain streams, the moon, the stars, and the small flowers in the fields — these things have inspired our poets since they first began to sing. Chatterton is among them: he left us many beautiful descriptions: take, for example, his picture of Autumn:

> When Autumn sere and sunburnt doth appear
> With his gold hand gilding the falling leaf,
> Bringing up Winter to fulfill the year,
> Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf. . . .

or this, of the rising and going down of the sun:

> And now the grey-eyed morn with violets drest,
> Shaking the dewdrops on the flowery meads,
> Fled with her rosy radiance to the West . . .

Simplicity is the essence of lyricism. Perhaps Chatterton learnt from Chaucer the art of concealing his art behind a veil of apparent artlessness. What could be more charming in its simplicity than the poem which begins:

> Beside a brooklet as I lay reclined,
> List'ning to hear the water glide along,
> Minding how thòrough the green meads it twined,

and goes on to describe the fair goddess, Truth, arising from the river and holding discourse with the poet?

A sure manifestation of a poet's genius may be found in the figures of speech he uses, for these are purely the products of imagination. Chatterton's similes are always congruous: they present a clear and vivid picture to the mind. He did not make the mistake, as Shelley occasionally did, of selecting a poetic simile although its application required a little stretching of the imagination; like Homer and Shakespeare he had an instinct for the most felicitous image for the particular context. In "The Battle Of Hastings", for example, he likened the "ten thousand floes" (arrows) fired into the air by the Normans to

> . . . a flight of cranes, that take their way
> In household armies through the archéd sky.

Metaphor may be still better as a manifestation of a poet's originality, for whereas a simile is always a conscious effort to perceive a resemblance between objects apparently dissimilar, a metaphor is conceived, as it were, by a more intense fusion of elements in the heat of imagination. In the same poem he spoke of "poignant arrows, tipped with destiny," and to the battle scenes at Hastings he applied the technique invented by Homer in *The Iliad*: Chatterton built up his canvas by selecting a series of incidents from the battle and painting each of them in a few vivid strokes. Throughout fifty stanzas the battle rages without approaching any nearer to the end, and when he broke off after the seventy-second stanza he left the impression that he could have gone on indefinitely. Again and again, in a few words, he called up a vivid picture:

> Now, ribbed in steel, he rages in the fight,
> And sweeps whole armies to the realms of night.

If somewhat puerile, by reason of the palpable delight in bloodshed, this poem is one of Chatterton's finest achievements. We cannot but marvel at the fertility of his imagination and at the way in which he used his limited historical knowledge to the best advantage. The first stanza from the poem is worthy of quotation as an example of the rhyme scheme adopted by Chatterton as well as being further evidence of his poetic ability:

> Oh Truth! immortal daughter of the skies,
> Too little known to writers of these days,
> Teach me, fair Saint! thy passing worth to prize,
> To blame a friend and give a foeman praise.
> The fickle moon, bedeck'd with silver rays,
> Leading a train of stars of feeble light,
> With look adigne the world below surveys,
> The world that wotted not it could be night;
> With armour donn'd, with human gore y-dyed,
> She sees king Harold stand, fair England's curse and pride.

The best-known work in the Rowley cycle is the tragedy of "Aella". This is indeed a miraculous production and would merit honour for any man of genius. It contains no excrescent material, as might be expected of a youthful Romantic, but is somewhat reminiscent of the works of Corneille and Racine in the great period of French classical literature. The plot is classically lucid and moves inexorably to its tragic conclusion. As Chatterton wrote in a confident letter to Dodsley, the London publisher: "It is a perfect tragedy; the plot clear, the language spirited, and the songs (interspersed in it) are flowing, poetical and elegantly simple; the similes judiciously applied, and though wrote in the reign of Henry VI, not inferior to many of the present age." Of the songs which he mentions the most famous, and usually the only poem by which he is represented in anthologies, is that beautifully pathetic lyric which begins:

Oh sing unto my roundelay,
Oh drop the briny tear with me,
Dance no more on holiday;
Like a running river be.
My love is dead,
Gone to his death bed,
All under the willow tree.

In lyrical beauty and dramatic appropriateness I rank this alongside Shakespeare's best work, though if you compare it with one of Ophelia's songs in "Hamlet" it is immediately obvious that he chose the best teacher.

Coleridge believed that no man was ever a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher. This is a question that has caused much argument: but we can hardly expect a profound or consistent philosophy from a boy of eighteen. The only suggestion of philosopher in the writing of the Rowley poems appears in one of the eclogues. Here Chatterton compared the great man and the humble man to a tree and a floweret in a storm, but all that it amounts to is a Romantic expression of Bunyan's single line "He that is down needs fear no fall." In Chatterton's other works, however, we find evidence of a searching challenge to the existing order of things and of a mind which will accept no answer unless the acceptance is dictated by Reason:—

Happy the man whose reason bids him see
Mankind are by the state of nature free;
Who, thinking for himself, despises those
That would upon his better sense impose.

He possessed considerable mental vitality and was tormented, like many poets and philosophers before and since, by the eternal unanswerable questions:

Why do we live to feel of pain on pain,
If, in the midst of hope, we hope in vain?

But his philosophy was merely embryonic, not as mature as his poetic genius, and it is impossible to speculate with any confidence about what he might have done in his maturity.

"Poets are born, not paid," a wit once remarked, and in the case of Chatterton it is sadly true. He failed to find a publisher for the Rowley poems, and all the money he earned from his writings was for political pamphlets or occasional modern poems. However, his genius was sufficiently versatile to be able to undertake any kind of literary hack work and make a competent job of it. "The African Eclogues," in which he comes near to the high standard achieved in the Rowley poems, were published in various magazines whilst he was still alive, and so was that exquisite elegy, "Why blooms the radiance of the morning sky?"

This leads to a final point which I think is worthy of mention: Chatterton's humour. It flashes occasionally in his satires, but reaches full expression in that delightful burletta, or comic-operetta, "The Revenge".

Here Chatterton reveals another aspect of his remarkably versatile genius; his lyrics, many of them with a Gilbertian ring, prove that he was already a librettist of excellence. Those two infallible elements of good humour, surprise and bathos, are combined with masterful skill when Bacchus, excogitating over his crimes, suddenly realises: "You'll look confounded queer in the Old Bailey." The effect of the piece is like that of the music of a stream rippling over pebbles; shallow perhaps, but essentially lyrical. Flimsy, airy, delicate, unreal; but delightful, magical, and superbly musical.

And so, returning to our starting-point, we are faced again with the question: What was Chatterton as a poet? If poetry is the product of a mind which is uniquely sensitive to beauty in the natural world and which is capable of expressing in unique words those dimly realised feelings evoked by such beauty, I think he had greatness. So if poetry is "the right words in the right order," and depends upon an ear delicately attuned to the music of words, individually and in combination. And if it is simply another word for imagination I don't think I exaggerate when I say that his imagination was as vivid and creative as that of any poet before or after him. We are left contemplating the miracles this eighteenth-century prodigy might have performed if he had not been driven to commit suicide in his eighteenth year.

VOICES ACROSS THE SEAS

INQUIETUDE

HELENE PATRICIA COLLACOTT

Why did you pass along my quiet ways
  Your golden bloom upon you, proud and fair,
And so disturb my ordered, peaceful days
  With your beguiling grace and god-like air;

Why did you shake to laughter and delight
  A mind attuned to dun and sombre things,
And give a threadbare spirit feet of light,
  An earthbound heart ethereal, splendid wings;

Why did you wake the sleeping ecstasy
  And stir again the deep and ancient woe
With urgent promise of eternal Spring
  To one whose Spring was ended long ago.

(Ontario)

WINDSWEPT

MARIE TELLO PHILLIPS

I had a garden in a summer maze
Of vari-colored flowers, with hollyhocks
In pink and red rosettes, and four-o-clocks,
Roses and larkspur nodding in a daze;
And parasols of petals in a haze
Of goldenglow and marigolds, and box
In evergreen, beyond the purple phlox,
To hedge my paradise from public gaze.

A fountain fell and mirrored merrily
The love and laughter in my heart; but then
A cold and cruel wind blew over me
And left my garden barren as a fen,
A windswept waste for all the world to see,
With autumn near, too late to bloom again.

(Pennsylvania)

TO D.M.

MARGARET LOUISE POTTER

I could say in my mind
  You are better home,
That it makes no difference now,
For the trees are bare . . . and the leaves are blown
And the wormwood seeps the bough,

I could say with my lips
  I do not care,
That it's all forgotten; done,
For the red of the barberry-hedge is fair
And the silvyn frosts are spun,

But my heart has a tongue and voice its own,
And the whole of the truth it knows,
Since all of your world was a singing poem —
The rest of the world is prose.

(Nova Scotia)

A HERO

From the Argentinian of Pedro Miguel Obligado (1892)

PATRICIO GANNON

He went through life, as if he wisely knew
Through another life the value of this world.
His soul, as if it had been made of smoke,
It only lived to lift itself from earth.

When love came knocking at his slender door
He then in silence locked it with a key;
As Glory approached him with her stirring kiss
He in haste contrived his person to conceal.

When Happiness arrived he simply said:
"There is no need to trouble for my sake".
And even Fortune was so stimulated
By his refusal that she tried — in vain.

For he possessed that shade of sad experience
Of one returning from a happier land,
And in the manner of a dried-up fountain
How well he valued what the world is worth.

He would remain after so much denying
As a lone tree branch when the sun is set,
And like the presence of a gloomy castle
He seemed not even tender to himself.

Only the night when he felt death approaching
He, whose caresses had been cast on none,
Opened his arms, and his sad eyes he lowered
As on the bosom of a mother's love.

(Buenos Aires)

Editorial Note — Pedro Miguel Obligado, who was born in Buenos Aires, comes from an old Argentine family of distinction in poetry and letters, being a nephew of Rafael Obligado, author of "Santos Vega". P. M. Obligado's "Hilo de Oro", published in 1925, was awarded the National Prize of Literature, and twenty-one years later he won it again with "Melancolis". A collection of his poems in prose, "The Lost Song", was published in England by Basil Blackwell in 1939.

A POET OF LIGHT

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

Il Paradiso di Dante, an English version by T. Weston Ramsey, with a Foreword by Roy Campbell (Hand & Flower Press, 18s. 6d.).

The rendering of Dante's Divine Comedy into modern English verse was the chosen life-work of T. Weston Ramsey, and the issue of his choice was strangely poetical. *Il Paradiso* in English was about to appear when the gates of paradise opened for him personally. Our President carried the proofs of Dante to the heaven reserved for him. It was as if he had prepared himself and his eyes had got used to the light. He had become "a creature whom no unwonted splendours blind".

The *Paradiso* is supremely a poem of Light. Paradise is full of stars, and there are as many heavenly bodies as there are souls of men. As in the sky itself each light has its position in its allotted circle, so each soul has its assigned station. The blest do not roam about at will as at a convention or a show: they do not have hands and feet.

> Thousands of burning splendours
> I saw converge on us, and all were singing.

The spirits with whom Dante converses are veiled in light. So the poem gleams like an Altar illumined by myriads of candles.

Weston Ramsey did not intend his version as a translation. For those who require them there are in existence several literal translations. Rather he wished to give an equivalent in English poetry — much as Fitzgerald dealt with Omar Khayyam. Literal translations are for students and even for pedants but poetry is for all. But the task of rendering Dante into English poetry is a very difficult one. In the first place Dante did not compose, he did not hunt up rhymes. He sang out of the fullness of a spiritual rapture. It all came pouring forth of him like bird song. But T. Weston Ramsey or anyone else following a text has inevitably to compose. One may say at once that this English version is composed. It rarely or never pours its full heart

> in profuse strains of unpremeditated art

The writing of the *Paradiso* presented many problems — and problems negate poetry. The reader is occasionally aware of these difficulties and can sense Ramsey halting for a long period before some gate for which he has no key. He gets by somehow but that does not invalidate a really fine work. For ever and anon he gets away from this earth and is with Dante and Beatrice ascending into realms of light and bursting forth into rapt expressions of pure poetry.

Some passages seem inspired, notably the greater part of Canto XXVII. And the version as a whole succeeds because you are carried along by

the poetry and whether you understand much or little the reading is not wearisome. "That sweet lady who along the road to God was leading me" will lead you too.

Your starting point may be some street in Hampstead. But you have to have the lamp of Beatrice to guide you to the Infinite, the lamp of the Eternal Feminine, of Athene, of the Holy Wisdom, of the Spirit of Truth. They were all one in the fourteenth century.

FROM GRAVE TO GAY

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

The Galloping Centaur, by Francis Berry (Methuen, 12s. 6d.).

Personal Poems, by William Buchan (Duckworth, 5s.).

Full Enjoyment, by A. P. Herbert (Methuen, 7s. 6d.).

There is nothing of the nine-years-pondered Horatian lay about Mr. Berry: his verse is in far too much of a hustle and its author in far too much of a hurry to collect it. But that he has powers of a high order is clearly evident from his finest of several sustained poems, "The Iron Christ", a noble theme in many ways magnificently handled. Even this leaves the reader sighing too often: if only the verse were moulded as well as molten; if only noise were not confused with strength and a Carlylean splutter not confounded with genuine poetic utterance; if only half the plastered-on epithets were stripped off, and the whole poem given the finish, the comparative brevity and dignity of Lycidas, what an enormous gain through loss it would be.

The great art of missing out applies to a collection as to the individual poem. What is the point of printing, let alone preserving, such work as "A Fork's a Fork", or even to take his most recent poems, the Rilkean pastiche of "The Panther", or the perversely contrived cacophonies and W. R. Rodgers at second hand in "Poor Old Hudders"?

Fortunately when the author stops straining and stuttering, he achieves lovely surprises like "Lines for a Christmas card", the single page of which atones for much that seems afflicted with a verbal St. Vitus's dance.

Mr. Buchan's first book is as slight in quality as it is in quantity. Younger than Mr. Berry, and probably less gifted, he has a finer dower of sincerity. He has marked limitations; he has technical imperfections such as "my garden gay" and rhymes like "white-respite", he also has an illustrious name to live up to; but he is always himself. A good example of his slender but genuine and unspoilt gift, is "Christmas 1942," the unaffected tenderness of which moves the heart when those who would take the kingdom of poetry by verbal violence leave it cold.

Call Mr. Herbert bourgeois, imperialist, right-wing die-hard, a writer whose recurring obsessions are polysyllabic officialese, Russia, Karl Marx, state-regimentation of any kind, and you still have not seized him; for he is Protean in his manifestations. A traditionalist, he can beat the vers-librists hollow at their own game, as in "The Dove", and similar oriental pieces; he can be exquisitely generous, as in "Jimmy", to a sworn political foe like James Maxton.

Of course he writes and also collects too much, but then that is our fault, for finding him so readable and enjoyable we just go on clamouring for more. And behind his often too-topical tomfoolery there is often profound wisdom, as in "The Failures" or in his amused surprise at the ugliness of modern art ("Is that the Face?"). Perhaps his greatest contribution to an age whose poetic highwater marks are alleged to be *The Waste Land* and *Ash Wednesday* is the poet's repeated reassertion of his right to laugh at himself as in "Doomed" and similar frolics.

QUILL AND BURIN

By YORKE CROMPTON

The Heart of Things, by Geoffrey Johnson (Williams & Norgate, 6s.).
The Sailing Race, by Patric Dickinson (Chatto & Windus, 6s.).

Geoffrey Johnson is the author of one of the wisest and most inspiring essays on the composition of English poetry that have been written in our generation. It is one for which many of us have reason to be grateful. But on himself it has imposed the full pack of a responsibility — that his practice should march in column with his precepts. To find matters otherwise would be like catching Fowler in an anacoluthon, or Edward Johnston in an inelegant scribble, or Mrs. Beeton in the act of burning the toast. And it is only human for the reader to cock his eye for signs of fallibility.

In his own poems, Geoffrey Johnson measures well against his essay. He is a resolute traditionalist, but one unencumbered by the literary greaves and breast-plates that form the armoury of so many of the backward-looking. Nor does his mantle creak with Puritanic starch; it fits him easily because it is the shape he likes to wear. If he takes up a loop in his garment here or there with the archaic brooch-pin of inversion, we hardly notice it, for his work is of one piece and satisfies us with its wholeness.

Mr. Johnson has published some half a dozen books of verse, and in his present volume he maintains his self-appointed standard. He cuts clearly round fundamental themes. I do not find in him a Koh-i-Noor, but the breath of his song blows the gem-dust across his pages in a crystal

stream that does not waver or die down. Never do we hear from him the throttled breathing of that kind of modernist who has to crawl into the iron lung of misplaced ingenuity to survive at all.

If I have any doubts about this book, they are concerned with what I think is the unwisdom of its title, which suggests a sentimentality that he is much above — or perhaps it is merely I who am allergic to cardiac references in poems. I also feel a twinge of regret that he should have entitled several of his pieces with time-bleached Shakespearean quotations such as "The Marriage of True Minds". When he invents titles of his own, how exquisite they can be! — for example, "The Impending Chime". But these regrets are trifling. Let us leave Mr. Johnson — and we hope it will not be for too long — in contemplating what he can do best:

> Down the green spaces of the mind
> Beyond the surface-swirl of care,
> The marble Muses, cool and kind,
> Beckon to an immortal air.

Patric Dickinson is perhaps best-known for his labours in producing poetry for the Home Service and Third Programme of the B.B.C. In this I can accord him sympathetic understanding, for I also have hoisted poets on to the air. *Et ego vinum paravi* — I too have applied the propitiatory Guinness at the "Feathers" or the "Stag", and am in a position to appreciate the difficulties of his task and the success with which he pushed it through. In his books — away from disk-jockeys, jump-cuts, and the seconds-hand of the studio clock — his talent frees its muscles.

And if Mr. Johnson's quill flows with cool and lucid imagery, Mr. Dickinson grasps his instrument as if he would dip his work into more pungent fluids. Sometimes his lines give a Hopkins skip-and-jump. Sometimes they Dylan-dally by the way. But his experiments are legitimate and usually successful, and he taps his ideas neatly on the head before he pins them down on paper. Though he may have less consistency than Mr. Johnson, he also has more fire. Some of his descriptions are too graphic to be pleasing. Compare, for example, with what I have just quoted from Geoffrey Johnson these lines of Mr. Dickinson's:

> A crumpled evening came,
> Stars fever-bright and dry,
> Reed-warblers scraped and scratched
> Their indoor nightclub rhythms,
> And the rich crooked frogs
> Drank muzzily and belched.

His orchestration brings us the tone of varied instruments, from the tart comment of the oboe to the strange high resonance of his strings. This is a book for the poetry-lover who seeks versatility and punch. We could do with more of Mr. Dickinson both on and off the air.

A PAGE OF BOOKS

Selected Poems of John Donne, edited by James Reeves (Heinemann, 6s.), is admirable as an introduction to the writings of one whose intensity and intellectual power make a special appeal to modern readers, although he lived before Shakespeare. Donne's "Divine Poems", songs and sonnets, epigrams and elegies are included and so is one of his Epithalamions, or marriage songs. Mr. Reeves is an impeccable editor.

Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle, by H. N. Brailsford (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 6s.), is a timely rebuke to those who imagine that the poets of other times lived and wrote in a world of peace and plenty. Shelley's writings can only half be understood if his work as a social reformer — hot-headed revolutionary is perhaps a truer description — is not taken into account. Mr. Brailsford's little book in the Home University Library, revised for the second edition, is an eye-opener.

More than fifty years ago an enthusiast for the English and Scottish ballad, Francis James Child, published his mammoth collection of traditional work in five folio volumes, and has been regarded as an outstanding authority ever since. On several occasions the collection was reduced for the student and John E. Housman, Lecturer in the University of Nottingham, makes a further reduction. *British Popular Ballads,* in the "Life, Literature, and Thought Library" (Harrap, 10s. 6d.) is advisable for the general reader, especially with its introductory essay, which makes us realize what a loss to scholarship has been caused by the editor's recent death.

The main currents in English poetry from Chaucer to the present are admirably traced in a neat little volume, *English Poetry,* by Douglas Bush, the latest of the Home Study Books (Methuen, 7s. 6d.). Mr. Bush is a professor at Harvard, and he emphasizes with graphic skill and generosity the importance of great poetry as the quintessential expression of our national genius. He links it up with the changing religious, philosophical and social beliefs and attitudes, and even brings in such movements as the Imagist and the Platonist.

No student, no devotee has a stronger claim to be our first Wordsworthian in contemporary criticism than Miss Helen Darbishire, and her *Wordsworth: Poems in Two Volumes,* 1807, is an essential re-issue if ever there was one. Originally published by Geoffrey Cumberlege at the Oxford University Press, this second edition (12s. 6d.) includes Miss Darbishire's introduction and notes revised, and a beautifully-done reprint of the volume as it was published in the poet's own time. As for the introduction it is a delight as well as valuable.

EDITORIAL LETTER-BOX

ON RHYMES

Dear Sirs — As one who has long been interested in The Poetry Society and *The Poetry Review*, may I express my appreciation of the reassuring "Notes for Newcomers" by the new Editorial Staff. However, when they say "Wanted, rhyme that is fresh and original, or none at all!" I heartily disagree with them.

The English language has a limited number of rhymes, used by the great masters for centuries to enrich the music of their creative work. These same rhymes will always afford adornment for English poetry, to-day and for all the future.

Rhymes that are "fresh and original" now can seldom be other than off-rhymes, or some ingenious association in humorous verse. Many good rhymes have been employed in the Christmas cracker jingle which in other and nobler associations are still instruments worthy of genius.

What gives freshness and originality to true rhymes are the thoughts and the words leading up to them, and their places in the stanzas. I am prepared to tilt a lance on behalf of skilfully used rhymes with any oncomer in the lists.

MARIE C. STOPES, D.SC., F.R.S.LIT.,
Vice-President, Poetry Society.

RIPPLES ON THE POOL

Gentlemen — It is obvious that *The Poetry Review* can never become a stagnant pool of imitative thought as long as there are people capable of throwing into it the kind of controversial pebbles contained in your "Notes for Newcomers". "Pebbles" is perhaps not the right word; I would rather describe them as boulders of a size which only a muscular Editorial Staff could lift, far less throw. The ripples raised are ocean waves.

With your criticisms of Cockney rhymes and mis-rhymes of other kinds, and with your remarks about modern affectations in punctuation and printing I agree. But when you come to declare what amounts to — hideous word! — a "ban" on a number of perfectly good rhymes I flatly disagree, and sincerely hope that you may find an early opportunity for qualifying your advice. Doubtless there have been third-rate pieces of verse written in which "earth" rhymed with "mirth", or "bloom" with "tomb", or even "skies" with "eyes". Doubtless also, in my anything-but-humble opinion, a gifted poet could write a good twelve-line poem using all six of the rhymes you reject. Verse containing those

rhymes has been bad because of weaknesses which had nothing to do with the use of those words — lack of originality, lack of sense, lack of music, lack of imagery, or too much sentimentality, too much striving after effect, too much self-pity. It may have been bad simply because it was written by people without ability to write poetry.

And what about colloquialisms and dialect? The condemnation of dialect would mean the condemnation, to take only one field, of all Scots verse employing a mixture of pure English and Scottish dialect words. The out-and-out condemnation of colloquialisms would rob the poet of the elbow-room his imagination demands, and would put him in a strait jacket as ridiculous as the one designed by the eighteenth century asses who said that a sentence must always end at the end of a line and never be carried on into the next line, and that a couplet must be complete (in sense) in itself.

Finally — assuming, gentlemen, that you have borne with me thus far — I sincerely applaud every effort you may make to infuse new vigour into the world of poetry. Humour, good fellowship, and the love of beauty are constituent elements in the breath of life to a far greater extent than controversy can ever be; but an occasional disturbance of the pool such as you have raised is all to the good if it brings interesting questions to the surface. In my heart and soul I don't believe you meant your advice to discourage any young person who really has the stuff of poetry in his or her being, and whose poems — written with total disregard of some of the rules laid down by yourselves — will, I am sure, find acceptance in *The Poetry Review* long after you and I have gone our way.

Edinburgh. PHILIP A. STALKER

EDITORIAL COMMENT. — Care was taken in the article "Notes for Newcomers" to emphasize that "the expert in poetry technique will always take risks, of course", and rule-breaking was granted to the "Master poet".

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, May 27th, 1953 at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than April 11th, 1953, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after April 30th.

—By Order of the Council.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude its subsequent review)

100 Best Poems in the English Language, selected by Stephen Graham (Ernest Benn, 10s. 6d.)
Collected Poems of Edwin Muir (Faber & Faber, 15s.).
Poetry Awards, 1951 (University of Pennsylvania Press).
Decline, twelve poems by Georg Trakl, translated by Michael Hamburger (The Latin Press, St. Ives).
How Smoke gets into the Air, by Terence Heywood (Fortune Press, 5s.).
From the Remains of Count C. W., Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated by J. B. Leishman (The Hogarth Press, 8s. 6d.).
Rod of Incantation, by Francis King (Longmans, 9s. 6d.).
My Song is for All Men, by Peter Blackman (Lawrence & Wishart, 1s. 6d.).
Emotional Hieroglyphics, by Honor M. Pulley (Mitre Press, 8s. 6d.).
The Legacy, by Michael Mason (Sheed & Ward, 2s. 6d.).
German Lyric Poetry, by S. S. Prower (Routledge, 25s.).
A Flame of Faith, by Hazel Littlefield (Cecil L. Anderson, U.S.A.).
Within the Tavern Court, by R. L. Cooke (Hand and Flower Press, 1s.).
The Frog Prince and other poems, by Alan Barnsley (Hand & Flower Press, 1s.)
The Modern Genilon, by Denis Williamson (Fortune Press, 6s.)
Through a Mist, by Norman Beyfus (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.).
Sea Days and After, by Michael Kelly (Partridge Press, 4s. 6d.).
Final Harvest, by Richard Rowley (Carter Publications, Belfast).
Storm at Westminster, by E. M. Almedingen (Oxford University Press, 6s.).
In the Hushed Leaf, by Blanche Robinson Williams (Dietz Press, U.S.A.).
The Trojan Women of Euripides, a new translation by F. Kinchin Smith (Sidgwick & Jackson, 3s. 6d.).
The Grace Notes, by Anabelle Merrifield (Bruce Humphries, U.S.A.).
Proceedings of The British Academy, 1948 (Oxford University Press, 40s.).
The White Goddess, by Robert Graves (Faber & Faber, 35s.).
Poems of Baudelaire, translated by Roy Campbell (Harvill Press, 21s.).
Lord Byron, by G. Wilson Knight (Routledge, 30s.).
Modern Greek Poetry, by D. E. Tournakis.
The Art of Sinking in Poetry, by Edna Leake Steeves (King's Crown Press, New York, 24s.).
The Anathemata, by David Jones (Faber & Faber, 25s.).
Chaucer, by Raymond Preston (Sheed & Ward, 25s.).

THE POETRY SOCIETY COMPETITIONS

Apart from the Elizabeth Bowes Lyon Award, the Premium Competition and the Oriole Prize (see page 294), the regular awards by The Poetry Society are summarized as follows. Full particulars were given in the October-December issue, and will reappear in the next number.

The closing date for the Junior Verse Competition is June 30th. Book prizes are offered in two classes — to competitors whose age is up to thirteen last birthday, and to competitors aged from fourteen to seventeen last birthday. Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, must be submitted to The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

A sonnet on any subject is invited for the Lord Alfred Douglas Sonnet Competition. Prize, £10. Address to: "Sonnet Competition," address as above, by June 30th.

The Greenwood Competition is for the best single poem, previously unpublished, not to exceed 250 lines, and open to all. Prize, £20. Closing date, June 30th, to "The Greenwood Prize," address as above.

The Howard Parsons Epigram Competition and Poems of Place Competition are held through the generosity of members of The Poetry Society, Mr. H. Parsons and Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes. Five, two, and one guinea are offered for the three best epigrams submitted by March 1st (mark the envelope "Epigram" and send to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1), and the sum of £10 is offered for the best poem of place previously unpublished, not more than 100 lines.

To all these Competitions a new rule is attached. Name and address of sender must not be given on the MS., but in a closed envelope accompanying it.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS
LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET AWARD: 1952

By YORKE CROMPTON

The sonnet is a strict master, requiring the poet to be equally a craftsman. Gold has a beauty of its own; bad smithery makes it gimcrack. A sonnet should express, if possible, a single thought. The imagery should be a close amalgam, the rhymes easy and exact. They should chime so that the ear, conscious of a narrow range to come, rings freshly at each stroke. This is much to ask of anyone.

Most of the entrants were lugubrious, as if afraid of being like Dr. Johnson's friend on whom cheerfulness broke in. Few of the sentiments expressed had much vitality. Amongst the best entries, W. A. B. Gardener contributed a characteristically thoughtful poem; but the grittiness that makes him so admirable an epigrammatist prevented his lines from running smoothly into a sonnet. On the other hand, Geraldine Kalka-Cash's amplitude of feeling requires a wider scope than Petrarch's shapely ambit can provide. Poems of considerable merit were also submitted by J. E. Terry, Frances Harland, and G. J. Blundell.

I award the prize to Ruth Crary of Chicago, Illinois, for her "I Remember Hands". Although one or two of its threads are a little loose, it is woven on a definite idea, and the poet has succeeded in conveying a genuine experience.

I REMEMBER HANDS

RUTH CRARY

Now I remember hands: my father's hands,
Incompetent in age, upon his flute;
Late-widowed hands, too tightly clasped in mute
Despair, helpless before the day's demands;
Hands, restless as the shifting, wind-blown sands;
Hands, vocative in spirited dispute;
Hands, futile — fluttering — irresolute;
Hands, languid — ever seeking Lotos-lands.

And there abides with me an immanent
Remembrance, haunting me with mingled awe
And beauty-worship, hushed and reverent:
The most expressive hands I ever saw,
Sculptured like some young god's, all eloquent
Of artistry — and hand-cuffed to the Law.

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT, NEW SERIES, No. 13

By KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

For this Competition there were twenty-nine entries. It was not difficult to recognize six entries as notably superior to the others, but not easy to isolate the best. The award goes to Winifred Kingdon-Ward, Sutton, Surrey, the runners-up (in order of merit) being: N. G. Strong (Tunbridge Wells); Eva Nendick (Ewell); W. J. Sedergreen (Great Missenden); Patricia Martland (Norwich); Kathleen Richardson (Buckhurst Hill).

A bird's wing may be, in shape and structure, remarkably like a harp, though somehow one had never noticed the similarity, and hence the "Wing-Harp" image of Winifred Kingdon-Ward achieves that ideal, in a metaphor, of being both surprising and yet inevitable.

Mr. Strong's "English Day" has the gleam and richness of an intaglio, and the poet the minute devotion of a lapidary. The poem has a wealth of unhackneyed epithets. There is danger, however, in having an ABAB rhyme-scheme in fourteen-syllabled lines, because so much intervenes between the first rhyme-partner and its consort that when the consummation occurs, its value is partly lost, as the ear has not retained the sound of the first rhyme-word.

Eva Nendick's "Logos", as chaste and austere as a nun's cell, is a perfect example of deep significance with artistic economy. Miss Sedergreen is equally unflorid, but her characteristic obscurity sent her poem to the fourth place when it might have had the first.

WING-HARP

WINIFRED KINGDON-WARD

I looked through a lattice
And heard a blackbird sing;
He stopped for a moment
And turned to preen a wing.

The wing was a harp
With stretched, taut strings
Which, plucked by his beak,
Said unutterable things.

He returned to his song
With happy notes and low
As blackbirds will;
I was glad he did so.

He sings of the earth,
Of the hedge with his nest
And the green, lovely things
That I know best.

But the plucked wing-harp
Has sounds I cannot bear;
It speaks of things
Intolerably fair —
Unendurably fair,
Terrible and wild;
The delight of a bird
And the heart of a child.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1
5. Each poem must not in future bear the author's name and address, but it must be accompanied by them separately, in a sealed envelope.
6. Entrants must be members of The Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st March, 1953.

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (The Poets Group of The Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5 for a poem details of which are to be announced each March. The award for 1953 will be given for a ballad on any subject. Competitors are required to adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and also on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address which must accompany every entry. No Competitor may enter more than one poem.

The winning poem will appear in *Poetry Review*. Do not enclose stamps as manuscripts are not returnable. Closing date 31st July, 1953. Address to: ORIOLE PRIZE, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

AUTUMN EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

Memorable indeed have been some of the Poetry Hours since the beginning of October. None of the large audience at the Reading in Italian and English with T. W. Ramsey's version of *Il Paradiso* will ever forget it. Three cantos were read (7, 23, and 31), first in the original, and then in translation, most movingly and beautifully by Senora Anna Canitano and Dr. Filippo Donini, with Miss Margaret Rawlings and Mr. Robert Speaight. Many in the gathering were members of the Italian Embassy and their friends, and Sir Eugen Millington-Drake presided.

The "producer" on this bi-lingual occasion was Mr. John Carroll, and in his capable management was another important evening, this time a Monday, when Monsieur Raphael Barquissau lectured on "Leconte de Lisle and his Native Isle". Again the audience were left with a moving and beautiful memory, and the evening, with his interpreter, Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, again in the chair, was crowned by a brilliant "epilogue", spoken extempore by M. Varan, of the French Embassy, Cultural Councillor of the French Academy.

The autumn season began with a novelty — a sort of preview, or in cinema-jargon a "trailer", which comprised a dozen five-minute summaries by their organizers of the programmes to occupy the Friday nights between October and Christmas. Mr. Thomas Moult, taking the chair for the first time in his Presidential capacity, saw to it that the programme was attractive as well as amusing.

At the next gathering Mr. Wilton Cole followed with a programme of "Poetry in Prose and Verse", and Robert Gittings of the B.B.C. gave a reading from his own work. Another entertaining evening brought the critics of the current issue of *The Poetry Review* to Portman Square, but the members of the Editorial Board were far from being daunted. Lord Dunsany's contribution to the number was the chief target for criticism. But *The Poetry Review* and the Board have survived.

One of the biggest audiences for a long time came to hear the rendering of Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus", by Mr. Charles Doran and his colleagues. A brilliant performance. The following week another packed house — "Standing room only" — heard Miss Kathleen Raine read her poems. The work of Ezra Pound was also presented, and so interested and pleased were several distinguished friends of his in the audience that they cabled the poet to tell of the evening's success.

The delightful Saturday Readings for Young People, so ably arranged and directed by Dr. Leigh Henry have created such a unique impression that we urge even the most elderly grown-up to attend the next series and enjoy them for his or her own sake. As we are obliged to go to press early for our Christmas issue the remaining programmes of the autumn cannot be reported. For the same reason the Readings at 33 Portman Square, which are to be resumed on Friday, 16th January, at 6.30, cannot be fully announced except through the medium of the usual leaflet, which is distributed to members in the London area, and the daily list of arrangements in *The Times*.

POETRY READINGS

You are invited to the Poetry Hour every Friday, 6.30 to 7.30, at 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Members 1s., Non-Members 2s. Celebrated Poets and Readers figure in the Programme. Also watch out for Monday Extras.

ELIZABETH BOWES LYON POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Elizabeth Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so — and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the first year's award is 30th June, 1953, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Elizabeth Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

A well-known hotel in an East Anglian town: an upper room crowded to the doors for poetry's sake: an audience from far and near, including many young people: an hour's talk entitled "Poetry For You": readings from modern poets: and then a show of hands to decide for or against the immediate establishment of a new Centre of The Poetry Society. The result: a unanimous Yes, and forty-seven members enrolled before the evening's end. What a heartening send-off to our recently-elected President's reign of office!

IPSWICH

Mr. Thomas Moult, indeed, was present at this introductory meeting of the Ipswich Poetry Centre, and it was he who gave the talk and read the poems, with Sir Francis Meynell following him as a reader from the poetry of Alfred Noyes, who was unable to attend through illness at home. Mr. Noyes spoke at the November meeting instead; he was splendid, his subject being "The Music of Poetry". One of the happiest features of the new venture, now well and truly launched, is that the Chairman is Mr. Noyes's brother-in-law, Mr. Engleheart. The Honorary Secretary writes: "I don't quite know how we are going to keep this standard up, having started at such heights!" The Honorary Secretary is Miss Kay M. Turner who, if letters are addressed to her at 18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich, will answer all enquiries and welcome anyone who is anxious to add to the membership and thus help the Centre to count its members well into the second half-century.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Another county town, Belfast, a highly industrialized community, justly proud of one of the largest ship-building and engineering concerns in the world, and famous for its linen mills, might well be forgiven if in the pursuit of the more material things of life the cultural aspect is neglected. Happily the contrary is the case, every branch of art being vigorously supported — not least, of course, The Poetry Society.

Founded in 1943 by Miss Marjorie Lyon, the Centre has developed strongly, and to-day has fifty-four senior members and ten juniors. At the Annual Meeting in September Dr. Frazer-Hurst, the President, declared his refusal to believe that the love of poetry is

decreasing, and we need no proof of this beyond the report on the session which ended in April. "Shakespeare When a Boy", "Scenes and Songs from Shakespeare" (Gwen Graham), "Francis Thompson" (Ray Rosenfeld), "The Wee Folk" (Dr. and Mrs. Stonely), "Masefield's End and Beginning", and a recital by our John Holgate — a brilliant affair — these were the delightfully attractive programmes at the monthly meetings during the year.

The present session was launched as successfully as usual with a delightful recital in September, given by junior members from Masefield, Stevenson, Flecker, and Humbert Wolfe. In October a recital of "Poetry and Music of the Sea" attracted a large and appreciative audience, partly due to the circumstance that we have a healthy following of visitors. Any traveller to Northern Ireland, finding himself with time to spare, might profitably make his way to the Kensington Hotel where he will receive the traditional warm-hearted Ulster welcome on any of these occasions: 19th January (a talk on "Presbyterian Poets" by Dr. Frazer-Hurst); 16th February (group-speaking by junior, intermediate, and senior teams); 16th March ("William Blake", a talk by J. Nelson Browne); and 20th April (a reading of Fry's "Boy with a Cart.")

A happy New Year to you, Northern Ireland, as well as Ipswich!

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Evidence of the breadth of mind which is brought to the activities of a famous seaside Centre may be found in the circumstance that its President is the Rev. F. Pratt Green, who has contributed to this number of *The Poetry Review* a gallant reply to Lord Dunsany's arraignment, "The Fall of the Muses".

At their recent annual general meeting the Brighton and Hove Poetry Centre re-elected Mr. Pratt Green to represent them on the General Council of The Poetry Society. Enquiries about the Brighton and Hove Centre may be sent to him at 246 Ditchling Road, Brighton, or to Mrs. G. R. Ramsey, the Hon. Secretary, at 89 Poplar Avenue, Hove. Meetings take place every third Saturday afternoon of the month from 3.15 to 5 p.m. at the Wentworth Hotel, 37 Marine Parade, Brighton.

GUILDFORD

Pupils of Denehyrst School and many other young people and grown-up residents of this busy town in Surrey were not prevented by a wet October day from assembling at the Centenary Hall for a lecture by William Kean Seymour, and their refusal to be kept away was richly rewarded. Mr. Seymour spoke on Thomas Hardy, and among the poems he read were "We Stood by a Pond this Winter Day", "My Cicely", and "Woman in the Rye".

More colour and warmth were added in November when a beautiful reading was given by Miss Mollie Hudson entitled "Gleanings and Gatherings from Twentieth-century Poets". Mary Webb and Walter de la Mare were among the authors, and so was T. S. Eliot, the reading of "Ash Wednesday" convincing many in the audience that it is "a truly wonderful poem". Mrs. F. E. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford, Surrey, would welcome any friend of poetry who, after reading the above, desires to be assured of warmth, colour, and good company through the grey months of our long winter.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

The name of John Betjeman was hardly known to the members and friends of this Poetry Centre before Mr. Brian Squire's lecture in October, but it is so no longer. An exceedingly interesting address was followed by a discussion which showed that the originality of Betjeman's approach had its appeal. Readers of Betjeman's poems, in addition to Mr. Squire himself, were Violet Law, Ruth Irving, and Elsie M. Gittens, who is the Secretary of the Centre. Mrs. Gittens, whose address is 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, welcomes those who wish to make personal contact with the Centre. The new season had begun in September with an excellent lecture on Matthew Arnold by Mr. Cecil Willson, and a reading of Arnold's poetry. In November Mr. Kenneth Lillington read Walter de la Mare's poetry to a good number of listeners.

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VANCOUVER

From the other side of the Atlantic has come a request by the Director of the Vancouver Centre that a miscalculation in reference to their activities (see last issue, p. 245), shall be corrected. Not thirty years in association with The Poetry Society but fifteen is their record, although the Vancouver Centre will shortly celebrate the completion of thirty years' work for poetry.

Mrs. Irene H. Moody, the Director writes that "in all likelihood the earliest affiliated Centre is that of Halifax in Nova Scotia".

In any case Halifax and Vancouver both have our greetings for 1953, and along with these and Ipswich and Belfast we close these reports by wishing all our Centres — a happy New Year!

CALLING ALL CENTRES

The call this time is to the Programme Secretaries.

Three expert lecturers offer their services "anywhere among our friends" if it will help the Centres to build up their New Year programmes. They are Mr. Kennedy Williamson, author and publisher, a member of the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*; Mr. William Kean Seymour, of The Poetry Society's General Council, who by now is well known to every member; and Mr. Yorke Crompton, of the Executive.

Mr. Williamson and Mr. Crompton would lecture on some aspect of poetry, and Mr. Seymour would repeat the lecture on Thomas Hardy which was given to the Guildford Centre in the early autumn. All communications respecting these offers should be sent to Miss Kathleen Cracroft, General Secretary and Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

Now for the usual list of the Centres which have not figured in the foregoing reports.

BOSTON (U.S.A.):—Full details from Miss Blanche T. Bigelow, 163 Eliot Street, Milton 87, Mass.

BRONDESBURY:—Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address — Telephone: WIL 6405.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:—Mrs. E. Vaughan, Green Acre, Beacon Hill, Penn, Bucks.

BURGESS HILL:—Meetings second Saturday in each month at Mrs. Lambert's restaurant, 45 Church Road. All enquiries to Miss K. G. Boycott, "Twemlow", Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (Affiliated to The Poetry Society):—Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A.

DUMFRIES:—Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

EALING:—All enquiries to Mr. William McDermott, 53 Gordon Road, Ealing, W.5.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.):—*President General:* Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, PA., U.S.A.

HAMPSTEAD:—Meetings on first and third Fridays, 8–9.30 p.m., at 14 Eldon Grove, by invitation of Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL AND DISTRICT:—Major E. H. F. Morris, Belclare, Old Town, Bexhill-on-Sea.

KENSINGTON:—Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

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THE POETRY SOCIETY

Founded February 24, 1909 :: Incorporated June 18, 1923

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,
General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Date .....

LEEDS:—Enquiries should be sent to Peter Bailey, 49 Cross Flatts Parade, Beeston, Leeds 11.

MANCHESTER:—Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester 13. Meetings at Milton Hall, Deansgate, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries should be sent to Lake Aske, Esq., 281 Wilford Lane, Nottingham.

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA):—Enquiries to Mrs. Borden Haverstock, 12 Ogilvie Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

REIGATE:—Meetings monthly at The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate. Enquiries to Mrs. M. A. Hicks.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.):—*President:* Helen T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

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ORIOLE POETS GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey — LEIGH HENRY.

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The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minumum fee of 5s.

The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

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★

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TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A stamped and self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least a month has elapsed. A decision may take longer.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

Next Issue—

LORD DUNSANY AGAIN

and the Announcement of Our

TENTH AND LARGEST PRIZE AWARD

for Poets Everywhere

These pages—An Offering to
EDITH SITWELL
"Distance is dead, the world
ends in the heart."

Prelude . . .

THE LAST PATRON?

Everybody is saying that with the passing recently of Sir Edward Marsh and Mr. Alec Rea almost the last of the individual Patrons in Art and Letters have gone. This form of patronage, in their case worthy but often in other generations unworthy, has been a powerful and indeed a memorable influence in our culture, and there are bound to be moments in a difficult future when struggling writers will envy those predecessors who were rescued from a garret or its equivalent by kindly hands.

But although we may have lost the Last Patron already a different form of Patronage continues, one that has been steadily growing, and in which The Poetry Society and *The Poetry Review* may claim an outstanding share. Indeed the time may have come for the poet to exclaim: "The Individual Patron is dead — long live the New Patronage!"

* * *

Year by year The Poetry Society has given poets of every authentic type, young and not so young, orthodox and revolutionary, a material and moral encouragement which has extended far beyond printing and circulating their work. Many hundreds of pounds have been distributed to them since the second World War, and *The Poetry Review* invariably contains announcements of very helpful awards in money, apart from remuneration given for poems accepted — in larger numbers in each issue, it may be remarked, (without boasting, as Hilaire Belloc would say) than one finds in any other important poetry-magazine in the English-speaking world.

These examples of Patronage, moreover, are continually being added to, and particulars of the latest of them — the Albert Ralph Korn Award — are given in this issue. But no monetary help that The Poetry Society has offered so far can compare with a further offer to individual poets which will be made in our next number, and in magnitude will surely be a near-record.

* * *

Sir Edward Marsh was a true patron. One of his "Georgian" poets writes: In an upper room, quiet above the traffic that seethed around

Grays Inn, once upon a time — the early 1920's — a dozen poets would gather together to talk away the London evening. Walter de la Mare, W. H. Davies, Lascelles Abercrombie, Laurence Binyon, Edward Shanks, J. C. Squire, and the Chairman of your Editorial Board, were among them. They sat among crowds of books, and pictures that covered all the wall space: their host was a man of cultural and friendly mien, generally addressed as "Eddie".

One survivor at least has not forgotten his share in that artistic comradeship. Every Sunday morning he found his way back to those rooms in Grays Inn for breakfast with Edward (then Mr.) Marsh. He remembers how, when asked for his idea of the perfect man, Eddie answered without hesitation: "Rupert Brooke", whose death had been a great blow to him. Like Brooke, many young writers and artists had reason to bless the name of one whose only personal ambition was to encourage the work of others.

* * *

The Poetry Society of America is nearly our twin — a younger brother only by a year. And in January its 43rd anniversary was celebrated with a dinner at which the chief guest was Carl Sandburg, on whom the Society conferred its "Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement". Over 250 guests were present, and (in the words of the President, Mr. Robert Hillyer) they received the greetings of The Poetry Society here, cabled by our President and Chairman of the Editorial Board, "with warm applause". "Those present on that happy and decorative occasion, some of whom are among our best poets, were much moved by your fraternal spirit, and I hope that you will accept our thanks and convey them to our colleagues of The Poetry Society in London."

Among the "best poets" referred to by Mr. Hillyer — himself a poet of distinction — were Leonora Speyer, Margaret Widdemer, Alfred Kreymborg, Gwendolen Haste, Henry Morton Robinson, and Oliver St. John Gogarty. Dr. Gogarty received tribute for "Services to Poetry". And Kathleen Raine, who read her poems to a Friday audience at Portman Square in November, was awarded the Edna St. Vincent Millay Prize for her book, *The Pythoness,* published last year by Hamish Hamilton.

Carl Sandburg, who was described at the Dinner as "himself one of the greatest stories in American history" referred during his speech to "The Abracadabra Boys" — a new name for them! The American Poetry Society honoured him, the citation stated, "because, above all, as a poet, you have sung nobly and memorably of things close to the heart of man, communicating fortitude and faith, and lighting the road ahead of us."

* * *

Two years ago, among our book reviews, *The Blessèd Pastures,* by Wilfred Rowland Childe, was selected for appreciation. The critic

wrote that "since 1911, when Mr. Childe made his début with *The Little City*, he has steadily and unobtrusively cultivated the small plot of ground that he made his own, a garden mainly of Madonna lilies . . . where the rumours and visions of the industrial *regio phantastica* on the far side of its lichened walls are yet sensibly and occasionally apprehended with no uncertain horror." The review included a quotation:

> Where there is nothing but a haze of fields
> And distant cattle feeding, and a sound
> Of chaffinches that chink in linden trees.

Such writing, the critic added, has "a truth to nature and a music that many a severer poet might envy." Wilfred Childe's lines are reprinted in a Memorial Card sent recently by Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Childe to his friends.

* * *

Seldom indeed does a young writer express appreciation to an editor for accepting his or her contribution. The following quotations from a letter received by *The Poetry Review*, thanking us for printing a poem by the writer of it, may therefore be welcome to those members who wish for reassurance that their support of the Society is worth while:—

"The magazine arrived at my house on New Year's Eve. I was tired but happy, and hadn't been writing very much poetry since my engagement was but a week past, and when one is happy there is no lonely need to fulfil . . . But to-day as I walked to the trolley stop I felt so completely glad about life that it could not be phrased . . .

"The sight of one's own efforts often stimulates the spirit to action, and I am beginning to long for the feeling I used to have during my moments of 'creation', as I call it. Poetry does not die within us, do you think? Once the flow of it has begun, and though it may have been partly quenched, there is more and more thirst for it. I wish to convey to you my thanks for your publication, which first came to me long before my verses were written."

* * *

The poem by Louis MacNeice announced for this issue was not available by the time of going to press. Mr. MacNeice is in America. We regret the unrealized but not unfounded anticipation. It is also regrettable that some recently published books are held over for review until our next issue, including *An Italian Visit*, by C. Day Lewis, *Joy and Verity*, by Marie C. Stopes, *No Time for Cowards*, by Phoebe Hesketh, and *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter*, by Federica Garcia (See "Books Received"). Since the formation of the Editorial Board an unusually large number of new works — poetical and about poetry — have reached us, and space for review is limited, especially in the following pages, where a publishing occasion, rather than the book published, has been given what we trust is not an unjustifiable proportion. THE EDITORIAL BOARD

SONNET

On the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

That you have made us love you is your fame,
And has been since, a wide-eyed child princess,
  You looked on London in your loveliness
And heard his lieges cry your father's name.
Now Queen, with shining faith and steadfast aim,
  Enthroned, you prize the homage we profess,
  Sharing your peoples' triumphs and distress,
Giving and given as the trumps acclaim.

Sometimes the crown brought sorrow to the crowned,
  By swords upheld; but in our hearts secure
Long may your thoughts in happiness abound
  And peace your soul's serenity ensure.
So shall each day go gently in its round
And a great reign in love and time endure.

THE MONTH OF PLAIN INTERPRETATION

JOHN HOFFMAN

October is the month of plain interpretation,
And of imperishable wisdom:
A leaf leaving a fearless tree;
A sister leaf serenely falling through the light hours of unfathomable sun;
A common leaf giving itself to our common mother, the earth;
A golden leaf knowing that the green dawns of resurrection and of spring
cannot come
Except from the self-surrender and the death;
An eternal leaf telling us that the arch-angels of thunderous Beauty,
Cloistered in clay through the cold winter,
Suddenly shall come,
Tigers of light facing us in the forest of our doubt —
O man, alone with every perfect bud and every shallow deed,
Do you deny the Christ or do you affirm Him?

Now, at leaf-fall, and at the time when spiders crawl from black
crevices on our southern walls,
When mice come from the fields, finding an entrance past our bolted
doors,
To disturb us with their loud scratching in false roofs,
With their scraping on our pantry shelves, and with their mocking
beneath our bedrooms floors,
Now, while we are listening,
At this recurring time when happy children innocently are gathering
thorns for burning,
When God is kissing the soul,
Let us match our simplicity with the child, our humility with the leaf,
our charity with the Christ,
Reminding ourselves that October is a month of plain interpretation,
And of imperishable wisdom.

FOOTPRINT IN SNOW

RITA SPURR

Here is the imprint of a personality,
Here in the snow.
Here, yes, the weight of flesh and bone,
But in that mark, too,
A fleeting moment of eternity
Is pressed into the waiting earth.
A purpose lies in that swift step,
Grown from a million totterings;
The foot is lifted, and already
The fateful mark is blurred,
A thing of the past.
Soon, melting snow and human tears
Will obliterate
The clear meaning of the act.
The mark is history
And he, who made it,
Vanished with the snow.
To-day and yesterday have mingled
In earth and spirit
And the new is born.

BULL

ALUN LLEWELLYN

Slow with the majesty of weighted gait
in solemn step of pondering pride
crown-wide with horns, in shouldering state
the bull takes his considered stride,
feels with strong hoof the shaken earth,
breathes to the air his menace, lifts
a head proud with imperious birth,
an eye that takes as regal gifts
the broad, bowed pastures and the river's run,
shade from the woods, obeisance from the sun.

Deep in dark recollection of his blood
in massive meditation stirs again
the long, ancestral memory, dream-renewed;
the ancient generations of his reign,

where washed with the golden, reluctant
light of the breathing wave
on shores burdened with beauty,
with olive and flowering fig,
with amaranth and hyacinth
to groves of the chestnut clambering,
where the corn-land gathered its sheaves
and the grape hung big,
white as moon to the sun's light
shone the long, marble-hewn terraces
mounting to palaced pavements
of the high halls of Cnossos
threaded with lamps alabastrine,
with shimmer of spear and of helmet
cast in the amber lucency
of moulded bronze:
there, colossus,
he, the bull, loved of Minos,
the terrible, the adored one
tamed to Demeter, earth's mother
giver of crops and of wine;
he, the monarch magnificent
with flower and fruit fresh-garlanded,
watched with an eye dark with deity

the worshippers' suppliant line,
the sistrum-song and the chorus,
the dance and the hands in festival;
the sweet Pelasgian piping
heard, and the paean knew
that men to an earth rich in bounty
sang, making gift of their prowess,
their delight in the litheness of being,
in air and sea and the morning,
giving thanks for all things that grew:

and pondering, then, remembered the wine-hued wave
the sun's bright hands laboured so long to pave
when, god-inspired, his golden loins bore
Europa, virgin, to a virgin shore.

ORPHEUS

JOHN BAYLISS

Into the darkness, Orpheus. The sad night
Scatters its stars to find Eurydice
Yet cannot stir the semblance of her hair.

The cool air wafts her shadow to that sea
Where all forget, the loved ones and their lovers,
And black winds drive away the flying light.

IN JANUARY

EVATHIA MOWLE

For a moment
Even before the snowdrop
A white bird may fly above the lake
And, swift-winged,
Shatter the complacent air
To mock, below, the water's murky insolence.

Then, elusive as the poignancies of dreams,
For a moment
April may tremble in your blood.

EXHIBITION

KATHLEEN V. RICHARDSON

Critics are burdened by their understanding;
Critics stare in envy and frustration
At the uninhibited proliferation
Of Le Douanier, Picasso, Braque, Matisse,
Gauguin, Van Gogh —
Critics deftly squeeze
Philosophy from the Man Without An Ear
And study the geometry
Of the bulge in the cheek
And the superb technique
Of the smear.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

BARBARA BAKER

Bells! Swinging bells in windy steeples,
Call the people to remember,
Remember, remember, all those dead ones.

Swiftly I placed a hat of mourning
On my pale silver hair of sorrow,
Took in my hand the glowing poppies.

"Stupid," I thought, and swung them lightly,
"How can one heart remember millions,
Millions of women, men and children?"

There, where the wreaths lay, mine I added,
So far from this, so far from that one,
All thought imprisoned in my fingers.

I entered the doorway of the great church
Hearing the organ music swelling,
Hearing from nave and from the side aisles

Drowning the organ notes, a singing,
Singing that filled my heart with sorrow
Yet left my mind uncomprehending.

German and French they sang together,
Russian, Italian, strange far eastern
Voices that were like birds a-twitter.

All, all the nations here were making
Music drawn up from wells of sorrow,
Filling the air with tears of music.

From that loud singing of the people,
Words that I heard but understood not
Sank to my heart and were translated.

"Heart, heart, be silent. Tell me no more
Of anguish, of death withheld, of torture,
Of agony borne beyond all bearing."

Terrible songs of foe and ally,
Songs of remembrance of the people.
"Bells, stop your ringing. I remember."

MAIDA VALE

MARGARET STANLEY WRENCH

From stucco villas they lean, whose filigree
Scrolls above door and lintel are soiled as the lace
Handkerchiefs they wave to the hussar
On his grey charger dappled and proud as spring,
Then turn in their claret velvet, showing their shapes
Sleek as seals, then swelling and iridescent
As courting pigeons. Ormulu and lacquer,
Onyx and jet, then, with the scent of the limes
A ghost of patchouli and wild white violets —
But furtive, sallow, shrunken by his dread
The passer-by hears in the scrape of a leaf
Dry as a nail and shaped like a starving hand,
Terror, betrayal, camp, pogrom and death,
And does not heed, but shuffles between the shadows —
And they, the ghosts, whose only life was man,
Blanch and are drawn once more to their stucco hell,
A century of man's indifference.

THE STRANGER

HERBERT BLUEN

In streets that seem foreign,
I wander alone,
Some faces are friendly,
Some hard as stone.

In the light of a smile,
At the touch of a hand,
Sometimes I glimpse
My own secret land.

But the vision dissolves,
The strangeness returns,
My true home seems distant,
And still my heart yearns.

THE ROBOT

HERBERT BLUEN

His mind is like a garden neatly fenced,
What lies beyond, he does not care to know,
He cultivates the customary flowers,
And prides himself upon their brilliant show.

His life is governed by a strict routine
Of tube-trains, tax returns, and golf week-ends;
At business, he's a well-designed machine
That functions smoothly; he has many friends.

The world respects him; he has made his way,
And when he dies, the world will show its woe,
And some for his soul's happiness will pray,
Not knowing that his soul died long ago.

A SECOND GLORIANA

By STUART HOLROYD

Every age is, to some extent, an age of discovery. This is no less true of the present time than it was of the first Elizabethan age. But whereas in the sixteenth century man came only to a realization of his own potentialities and to a knowledge of the world in which he actually lived, the discoveries of the last hundred years have been primarily scientific and not concerned with the actual world. Science has affected literature in two distinct ways: it has helped to make the artist more self-conscious, and has glorified the false idol, Construction, at the expense of the true god, Creation. In this and in their social history the two periods are entirely different; to find a point of resemblance we have to regard their respective positions in the history of English literature.

The (first) Elizabethan poets wrote in a comparatively simple age, one in which the spirit of adventure was predominant over all fields of human endeavour. In 1578 Drake sailed around the world and ten years later the defeat of the Spanish Armada established England as the supreme maritime power. The explorations of Raleigh and Hakluyt stimulated the imagination and opened vast fields of speculation. There seemed to be no end to the knowledge which man could acquire and everything was explored with an ardent curiosity. Since the days of Chaucer and Langland poetry had languished in a profound sleep, disturbed and tormented now and then by the jejune efforts of imitators; but when Spenser published his "Shepherd's Calendar" in 1578 he gave new life to the English language and enriched her poetry with a remarkable variety of original verse-forms. This work laid the foundation of a tradition in English poetry which was to last for three hundred years and produce some of the greatest literature in the world.

Spenser was the first great poet of the period, but he was followed very closely by some exceptional men of genius. Never had conditions been so favourable for the poet; all classes of people were united in their thirst for knowledge and for adventure; there was no fear lest another war destroyed the human race; no pernicious inventions sapped the individual spirit; there was no universal apathy. It was this confident and optimistic society that made the art of Shakespeare possible.

Broadly speaking the poets had a love almost amounting to a reverence for the actual world, the world of fact; and they were content to present reality with such faithful and minute attention to detail that they penetrated the veils of convention and revealed in all things the manifestation of the Godhead. Thus, by their passionate love for all creation they expressed their faith in a Creator.

Such was that long-ago Elizabethan age, and at first sight it may

appear that any comparison between it and our own must be superficial. Civilization has developed to such an extent and in so many different directions that the poet cannot discover in it any unity, any common ground on which he can establish contact with a large audience. And until he establishes that contact we cannot reasonably postulate a poetic revival that will compare favourably with the achievements of the earlier Elizabethans. Social conditions in the contemporary world are not propitious.

Just as the Elizabethan dramatists, influenced by the flood of ideas from the continent, revolted against the tradition of the "Morality" plays so the poets of our generation in their turn have revolted against the tradition established by the Elizabethans. Thus the two periods have at least one thing in common: they are both turning-points in the history of literature.

The tradition of smooth, melodious verse started by Spenser enjoyed a long and distinguished life. Shakespeare practically exhausted its entire scope, and Milton had to return to the Greek and Roman classics before he could effectively adapt it to his purposes in "Paradise Lost". The pre-eminent genius of Keats and the other poets of the Romantic Revival invested the old forms with remarkable freshness and originality, coming, as they did, after the dispassionate precision of Pope and the eighteenth-century classicists. Then Tennyson came along and dealt the death blow. No longer could a poet write in the traditional forms without echoing one or other of the past masters. A new type of verse was needed, and one which would be a more suitable vehicle for expressing the poet's thoughts and feelings about the modern world. Experiments were made and certain results obtained, especially by Hopkins, Wilfred Owen, and Yeats in his later work. In their fear of the banal several poets became extremists and separated their poetry from living speech and from the real world. Such were the Symbolists and in more recent years the Surrealists. But it was not until T. S. Eliot published "Prufrock and Other Observations" in 1917 that any considerable step forward was taken.

Mr. Eliot did not break completely with the past. He borrowed from the later Jacobean dramatists a terse, abrupt kind of line which could be used for the expression of twentieth-century thought and emotion. He also endeavoured to incorporate into his verse the rhythms of contemporary speech. But he believed that "the poem which is absolutely original is absolutely bad" and his poetry is rooted in the traditions of the past and has developed naturally and inevitably out of those traditions. Indeed we can trace its genealogy back to the medieval accentual verse written by Langland.

This poetry, and most of the poetry which has been written since, must be considered as a vigorous attempt on the part of many poets to escape from the existence-in-a-vacuum which was the legacy of the Romantic

movement. To bring poetry to terms with the modern world and to enable it to find its place in that world — such was the purpose of the sociological and political poetry of the thirties. The poet was no longer content to sing of the conventional forms of beauty. In an age of anxiety the rose and the nightingale must be content to be of minor importance, and if he persists in their praise, so must the poet. But Mr. Eliot realized that "the essential advantage for the poet is not to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror, and the glory."

This change in the outlook and technique of the poet which took place in the first half of this century was only made possible by a flood of vitality and original genius which can be compared with that of any one of the great periods of literature. W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, Eliot, Ezra Pound, Edith Sitwell, Auden, and the later de la Mare — a dozen names come to mind immediately, all of poets who were acutely aware of the critical situation and who strove in their individual ways to solve it. They all shared that passion for experiment and that vitality in execution which characterized the poets of the first Elizabethan age.

The progress made by science in the last hundred years has blunted the faculty of wonder. Ordinary men and women seem no longer surprised at anything. But the poet, from the moment of the birth of consciousness within him ought to be amazed at everything he sees in this strange and wonderful world of ours. He ought to be surprised to witness the return of spring after a bleak winter (though other men would only be awakened from their lethargy of indifference if the spring did not return!); surprised when he lifts his eyes to the heavens and his imagination soars beyond the clouds and dances amid the stars; but when he sees a great city like London he thinks of the necessary intricacy of its sewerage system and his amazement is unbounded.

"A poet is a man speaking to men, a man . . . who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him". So wrote Wordsworth. "The spirit of life": these words are at the very core of the problem with which the twentieth century poet is faced. It was the spirit of life which was breathed into it that gave the Elizabethan drama its tremendous vitality and its consequent immortality. It is the spirit of life that is lacking in most contemporary literature. The poet whose blood is not responsive to the changing seasons; who does not feel the throbbing heart of the world in his pulse; who is not, like the seas, swayed by the mysterious and wayward magic of the moon; who does not outsoar the known and the knowable and tread unerringly the stepping-stones of intuition; who does not feel an ardent compassion for all living creatures and a profound love for all created things — such a man, if he remain a poet, will probably write very clever verses for the humorous weeklies. The spirit of life and the spirit of wonder are complementary terms; when they combine in a man

they do so to create that miracle for which any word would be inadequate, and which we designate as "genius".

There are poets writing in English to-day in whom this spirit is manifest. They have re-created and given new life to our language. If they treat it roughly at times, that is because it is vigorous and can stand up to rough treatment. But it cannot be said that theirs is a poetry of escape — Edith Sitwell's "Poems For The Atomic Age" should be read and understood by every man and woman in the world to-day. Such work is inspired by an all-embracing and passionate love, a love so ardent that it can hardly be contained within the limits of a poem. It speaks directly to the heart and the heart rejoices at it.

Here is the spirit of an inchoate Second Gloriana. If a new generation of poets and dramatists can combine this attitude to life with the technical innovations of recent times their works may stand on the bookshelves of the future alongside those of the first Elizabethans. This may be mere conjecture, but one thing at least is certain: in a world where fear is expressed on every trembling lip and distrust in every faltering hand the only path which leads towards redemption is that of human sympathy and universal love.

MAIDEN AUNT

EILEEN E. LAKE

From sixty years of crumbling dreams
Jut pointed feature, furrowing face,
And all a lifetide's ebbing seems
A weary drag to keep the pace

Existence asks: the bus at eight,
The mountain-rise of office stair;
The darkening heart, the desperate wait,
Leaning upon a broken chair.

But through the office looking-glass
Pain must turn bright, for none must know
When fortune-loaded ledgers pass
Before a mind in vertigo.

Bitter to feel the gossip splash
About the rites to her denied,
She cannot keep the wry-tongued lash
Of envy from the office bride.

In brittle gaiety she hides
Awareness, when they nudge and mock,
But chills their kindness too and rides,
Alone, her bus at five o'clock.

At home no waiting human hearse
To bear away the dead of day —
The stillborn thoughts that she will nurse,
Alone, beside a supper tray.

No personal tempests crash the still
Unwelcome of her restless peace;
Vicariously she feels their thrill
In visits of a grudging niece.

The newsreel cameras will not turn
For her, nor curious viewers press;
Her long endurance will not earn
Quay-side applause at last, unless

Surprise angelic brass-bands clash
And sweet fictitious trumpets sound
When, dead, beside the evening's ash
And morning's egg-shells she is found.

BLINDNESS

JOYCE HILLIER

I'll feel no joy or happiness or pain,
Laughter will never light my way again,
My dreams will all in darkness slowly die,
My eyes will ne'er be dazzled by the sky.

Though birds sing on and buds and pastures grow,
A shroud will hide this world I used to know,
Then one warm day a quiet peace I'll find,
A rose's scent will tell me I'm not blind.

FOR MARGARET

RICHARD G. JENKIN

Once Pliny said that pearls in oysters grew
Because into their shells dropped heavenly dew
When in soft summer nights they opened wide
Their horny shell and floated on the tide.
And so, like Cyprian Venus, Love's Lady,
The Margarite or Pearl is born of sea
And heaven. But I know a Margaret
Would make both Mars and Vulcan near forget
What joy they had in Lady Venus' arms;
And try instead with witchcraft and with charms
To win some favour from this Margaret's eyes,
For even gods would wish for such a prize.

Note to the reprint edition: "The Flower" by Odette Tchernine is not included in the reprint edition at the request of Odette Tchernine.

THE BUTTON-MOULDER SPEAKS

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Peer Gynt, love's prodigal from homely fells
Where every man was pliant to your smile,
Where laughing girls were wanton to your guile,
A waiting heart an ancient tale retells
Of questing feet that first conspired to climb,
Till wilder ways ran shouting to the seas
From home and heritage, to veil the pleas
Of love and labour and the whips of time.

But years that harass as a hurricane
Leave this poor fabric of an urgent youth
Who strode these hills and scourged a town in scorn.
Can you recapture urgency again,
Within love's sanctuary, for aching truth
Salvaged by Solveig's song, and hope reborn?

AFTER READING AN ANTHOLOGY OF OUR MOST MODERN VERSE

OLIVE RIVERS

Sorrow walks naked. The temple's pillars stand,
But bells are mute, and through the long dim night
Echoes no message men can understand.

Hope has been vanquished. In her jaded Court
The spirits whisper, shuffle, wriggle, curse and groan
In the grey anguish of their last resort.

Here the words spin, the nothingness is wrought:
Here the Black Alchemist turning gold to lead
Shrouds the Black Spider weaving back to naught.

Sorrow walks naked. But overhead the star
Of Bethlehem's night glistens the shadowed stones
Till these sad spirits whisper of the far
Long journey home, back to this faint white star
Reflected in the dark and watery depths
Of the lost souls our ghosts and spirits are!

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, on Wednesday, May 27th, 1953 at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than April 11th, 1953, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after April 30th.

—By Order of the Council.

HARRIET MONROE: AMERICAN PIONEER

By AMY BONNER

In the sense of her pioneering service, and the founding of *Poetry* magazine, Harriet Monroe has done more for the development of poetry in America than any other literary figure during the past four decades.

She waged a lifelong fight for poets and good poetry in an effort to foster honesty and independence, greater daring, more experimentation, and more virility. She achieved this. Her superb editorship, the distinction of her own work, her association with and influence upon others; the reflection of brilliance and catholicity of her taste guarded and guided the great poetry renaissance of the first quarter of this century. Her fearlessness in attacking the "output of Valentine verse, the veins of which ran cambric tea and not human blood," succeeded in replacing it with a vigorous American idiom. She poured out her life and energy into the battle, sacrificing herself as a poet.

As editor of *Poetry* one of Harriet Monroe's customs was to invite a young, newly "accepted" poet to do the first reading of submitted manuscripts. I served in this way in the comfortable old office overlooking East Erie Street, Chicago, where Miss Monroe sat behind her old roll-top desk, with the associated editor and business manager sharing her room.

She worked unperturbed by the movement and conversation about her. It was not unusual to find half a dozen poets there, engaged in discussing some phase of the new poetry. It was an experience to hear the words of the great and the near-great, for *Poetry* always has been a literary Mecca to which writers and critics from all over the country made happy pilgrimage. Sometimes we sat around and read our poems, deriving inspiration from one another's work.

We had parties, too, at Miss Monroe's home, and at her club. It was at one of these that I heard Ford Madox Ford read "On Heaven" (which appeared in *Poetry*, 1914) and also his remark that "writing poetry is like speaking to a very dear friend in a low voice."

Harriet Monroe wrote letters to poets all over the world — poets who poured out their hearts to her. After she passed away, her successors inherited this vast correspondence, part of which came to my office as Eastern Representative in New York. Along with her battle against shoddy work and impatience with "Victorian prettiness and posturings" went much personal kindness and encouragement. She had the gift of friendship. She shared not only her sympathy but her slender personal resources. On one occasion, when a certain poet, who had tramped from the far west with a box of poems under his arm, was found early in the morning sitting on *Poetry's* doorstep waiting for a breakfast hand-out, Harriet was there to supply it.

In all these activities she never promoted her own work, or read her own poems without persuasion. When she appeared as a guest at one of my series of Poetry Symposiums at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and recited her "Love Song," "On the Porch," "Mountain Song," "A Farewell," and "At the Edge," she was memorably received by the audience. She was a frail, tense figure, her large grey eyes sparkling with vitality and enthusiasm, her grey hair neatly draped about her face and caught in a knot at the back. Among the audience was Marianne Moore, who wrote later, in *Poetry*, "I recall when she spoke, and read from her work, her deep uninsisted-upon eloquence as she read 'The Pine at Timber-line'; and despite her own belief in her mind — one dislikes the term 'muse' — her air of alone-ness, her self-reliant and winning incredulity that it should be liked so very much by us who heard her. Her fearless battle for art — and in art — was present for me there in a conspicuous though disclaimed laurel, and I can but reverently anticipate a continuously-increasing expression of praise and gratitude for Harriet Monroe from countless people whose tribute would have astonished her."

Born in the rapidly-growing city of Chicago on December 23, 1860, Harriet soon began to write verse. Her first published poem was a sonnet on Shelley in *The Century Magazine*. She was invited by the Committee of Chicago Exposition to write the dedicatory poem. Her "Columbian Ode" was read and sung by a chorus of five thousand voices when the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America was celebrated in 1892. This brought her into national prominence, particularly after the *New York Sun* published the poem without authorization. Miss Monroe sued the paper and won the case.

Her first book of poems, *Valeria and Other Poems,* which was published in 1892, received "pretty good notices." It was followed by almost a dozen volumes, concluding with the posthumous *A Poet's Life, Seventy Years in a Changing World.*

For years it had become increasingly evident to her that the poets needed stirring up: the pale classicism of Woodberry was overpraised and imitated; Harvard backed Moody; the early small editions of the starkly progressive Robinson were treated doubtfully by the critics and left unsold; Emily Dickinson's *Poems*, published after her death had a slow reception as a personal aberration from the norm; and Gerard Manley Hopkins, dead in 1889, was not yet printed. The slight attention and meagre compensation granted to poets by publishers and the public made Miss Monroe more and more indignant. So, as she recalled in her autobiography: "The poets needed a magazine, an organ of their own, and I would start one for them! But how to do it?" She conferred with her friends. "My confidence gradually gained headway, and a talk with my old friend and adviser, Hobart C. Chatfield Taylor — novelist, lover of the arts, man of culture, wealth, and social prominence brought forth a

definite plan." By calling personally upon benevolent, civic-minded, citizens and business men she succeeded in obtaining "guarantors" who pledged $5,200 a year for five years, as well as a few outright gifts.

The first number of *Poetry; A Magazine of Verse* appeared in 1912. The early issues — typical of the editor's policy of publishing work on the basis of merit alone — contained the writings of poets who were to create the poetry of the renaissance: Vachel Lindsay, William Butler Yeats, George Sterling, H.D., Richard Aldington, Ezra Pound, Rabindranath Tagore (first appearance in America), William Carlos Williams, Francis Thompson, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Rupert Brooke, Wallace Stevens, D. H. Lawrence, Padraic Colum, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and so on down the years . . .

In August, 1936, Harriet Monroe left for Buenos Aires as Chicago's delegate to the fourteenth International Congress of the P.E.N. She looked small and shrunken when I called at the Hotel Bristol to see her off on the s.s. *Southern Cross*. Thus I was one of the last two of her poet-friends to see her alive in our country. We arranged that I would meet the returning boat. But she never returned. She made her way alone 7,500 feet half-way up the Andes of Alto Peru to Arequipa on her way to Cuzco and Lake Titicaca. She stayed at the home of Tia Bates, a legendary figure in that vicinity, older than Harriet, but looking, when I met her later in America to hear details of Harriet's last hours, like a young girl, with her short skirts, wiry figure and lively movements.

Harriet fell ill the day after her arrival, and had to be taken to the Adventists' Clinic where, after twenty-four hours of unconsciousness, she passed away on September 26, 1935. Tia Bates and members of the American colony in Arequipa heard the simple last prayers and placed flowers on the coffin. A few days later a postcard arrived from Harriet, telling me when to meet her returning boat. Somehow, I found comfort in receiving it.

The memorial issue of *Poetry*, December, 1936, contained tributes from those who realized the great personal loss, as well as the loss to the world of a unique figure in literature. Among them were Ezra Pound, George Dillon, Lew Sarett, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, and Wallace Stevens. In the University of Chicago there is now the Harriet Monroe Modern Poetry Room of original manuscripts, letters, inscribed first editions, and other valuable mementoes of *Poetry's* first twenty-four years — a monument to Harriet Monroe's memory and work.

POEMS IN MEMORY

I

EDWARD MEYERSTEIN

(Poet and Novelist, died September 12, 1952)

NATHANIEL MICKLEM

He was not of the fashion of this age.
  He watched his fellow-men with kindly eyes,
  A solitary, otherworldliwise,
And mindful of the Athenian heritage,
Master of metric art and genial sage,
  Who could not swerve to win the instant prize
  Of popular favour, for the merchandize
Of lore recondite lit his every page.

A lover's his response to loveliness
  In nature, music, or the engraver's art,
  Like Chatterton he trod in early youth
Disconsolate the Valley of Distress,
  But came to joy. His undivided heart
    He ever gave to Beauty next to Truth.

Mansfield College, Oxford

II

SAMUEL JOYCE THOMAS

(1875–1952, Formerly Chief Justice of the Federated Malay States)

R. C. THOMAS

Pledged to the law and in its service wise,
You probed the heart and will of stubborn fact
Yet ever strove to ease the law's impact
On simple souls whose wits betray their eyes.
What voice, imperative beyond surmise,
Convinced you, Sunday's child, that you must act,
One with the lads must fight where France, attacked,
Had neither strength to stand nor strength to rise?

Home! Home at last! But swirling overhead
The wind-swept gold of autumn scents' decay.
Your course was set: to east and west you sped
With justice, mercy, truth, your strength and stay.
How lovely are the courts that now you tread
Where God's own presence feasts perpetual day.

THE VOICE OF YOUTH

By JOHN GRADDON

It is a tribute to the vision of The Poetry Society that, in its bleakest financial hour, it inaugurated the most imaginative concept of its existence — the Junior Membership Scheme. If ever there was an act of faith, this was one.

The literary situation in this country has been desperate, magazine after magazine falling by the wayside, membership of our own and most kindred societies dropping catastrophically. It was in these circumstances that the decision was made. There could be no possibility of the scheme being self-supporting for many years, but the need was urgent. The cultural plight of children was evident, their ideals were and are being standardized and abased, and it seemed imperative that someone, somewhere, should start a movement wherein the child with aspirations, undergoing the turmoil of growing up, with imaginative strivings and unrest of spirit, would find an outlet for expression and balance for the mind.

These aims are indeed the *raison d'être* of the Society. The fact that the whole enterprise appeared absurd and impossible did not deter its initiators — the gesture had to be made. The scheme was simple. Boys and girls up to the age of eighteen (raised now to twenty-one) could become junior members of The Poetry Society at an annual subscription of five shillings. They would enjoy most of the adult members' privileges, instead of *The Poetry Review* they would receive a copy of their own quarterly, *The Voice of Youth.*

Has the scheme been a success? It all depends what one means by success. The future influence of a boy or girl can be incalculable and faith is the required prologue to any effort.

At the moment the total of junior members is about a sixth of the total membership of The Poetry Society. They provide a fertile influx into adult membership. A far greater proportion than in the adult membership participate in submitting poems and essays for printing and criticism and entering the competitions. Apart from a few guiding articles the bulk of the material in *The Voice of Youth* comes from the junior members themselves.

An initial stimulus of extraordinary value was given by Enid Blyton, whose influence with children of all ages and all over the world is most profound. The laborious and unselfish work done by one or two other people must be specially mentioned. Evelyn D. Bangay adds to her other voluntary burdens for the Society the enormous task of criticizing all poems sent in. The value of this cannot be overestimated, especially when we think of the task of writing an individual letter for every submission that will help and not discourage. Leigh Henry, who contributes articles that range all literary fields, conducts in person an extraordinary series

of Saturday "shows" for children at Portman Square. And many other helpers, of whom Yorke Crompton, A. R. Kendall, Fanny Moore, Kathleen Richardson, Wilfred Bell and Caron Rock are examples who find time in their busy lives to write and work for *The Voice of Youth.*

If the membership were numbered in thousands so much more could be done. If it were numbered in tens of thousands, spread throughout the world, it is not difficult to realize the effect on the future. These boys and girls who join of their own desire and choice may well be those who mould and set the artistic and cultural standards of the future.

The need and the possibility is shown by the fact that we have members everywhere overseas, notably America, China, South Africa, New Zealand and India. That the Junior Membership Scheme fills a void, which in this year and age ought not to exist, may be seen in the countless letters of thanks, praise and criticism from children who can afford to join and can also afford to renew their subscriptions. The obstacles are two:—

1. The Poetry Society has no funds for publicity and propaganda.

2. Many children cannot, out of their pocket-money, renew their subscriptions; and parents, through inability and disinclination, are sometimes unco-operative.

If you who read these words have faith in the future and belief in the ideals animating The Poetry Society — if you have any desire that children shall be turned from the products of their time and their regimented life to the contemplation of things true and beautiful; and if you feel the need for them to be guided to express the sincerity, purity and intensity of their emotions, imagination and thoughts; then you can do something about it, and here are ways in which you can help.

(a) Make it your personal business to see that every boy or girl you know, up to the age of twenty-one, is enrolled as a Junior Member.

(b) See that the scheme and *The Voice of Youth* is known to every school where you have or may have had contacts.

(c) Become an adult subscriber to *The Voice of Youth.* The cost is 6s. 6d. per annum.

(d) Ask at your public library for *The Voice of Youth* to be exhibited in the reading-room.

Speaking as the Editor of *The Voice of Youth* I would acknowledge a debt on introducing a special feature from a literary magazine that has, under economic pressure, ceased to exist. Our feature is to be entitled "The Poet's Staff". Readers are invited to send contributions to a Fund which will be used for no other purpose whatever than to enrol boys and girls who wish to become, or remain, junior members and cannot afford to do so.

Every amount, large or small, sent to me at 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., will be acknowledged and receipted. And Mr. Foley,

not content to make the suggestion, has started the Fund. The small sum of five shillings — fivepence a month — will make some boy or girl a junior member for twelve months.

But I do not want to end this article in bargaining! I only ask this: *Can you help one child — or many?*

We are in a year of Coronation hopes, a year of resurgence, the beginning of a new renaissance for our country. In this there is hope for the world. Will you help to make it a reality?

EXILED

DAVID MARCUS

Memory walks a lonely road,
Reaches a village in the mind
Where doors are shut, and flags are still,
And children sullen and unkind.

This is the place where once we came
And found a people who would aid
Our youthful love, and prize our joy;
This is the place where once we stayed.

And when we left they said, "Return,
Return again to greet your own."
But now they recognize me not,
Because I have returned alone.

THREE BAD WORDS

Three words in English ought to be abolished from the language, declared Kennedy Williamson in his forthright comments after judging the annual Verse-Writing Competition at the Ealing Centre. These words are still being used by misguided poets here and there, so it may be useful to name them. ("Amidst," "whilst," "amongst" — how much more effective and beautiful, he said, are *amid*, *while*, and *among*.

Further advice that might helpfully be added to our recent "Notes for Newcomers": "In a four-line stanza a rhyme in the first and third lines is curiously wrong, leaving a sense of impoverishment and disappointment. Second and fourth line rhyming is satisfying. And a rhyme-scheme is less than ideal when there is assonance in adjacent line-endings, as with face, pain, grace, again. The vowel similarity in the consecutive lines is poor craftsmanship."

ON VERSE-TRANSLATION

By PAUL SELVER

II

What are the main ingredients of a poem? In continuation of my notes on verse translation I would suggest the following rough schedule:

1. Its actual contents or subject-matter.

2. Its rhythmic structure.

3. Its verbal effects, including such features as musical qualities, subtleties of style and so forth.

Now the extent to which any given poem can be satisfactorily translated will vary according to which of these sets of ingredients looms largest in it. If it is mainly narrative in character, no great difficulties of translation ought to arise. Again, rhythms and metrical shapes can be reproduced with comparative ease, at any rate, as far as accentual prosody is concerned. (The controversial issues underlying the system of Greek and Latin scansion cannot be brought within the scope of these jottings. For one thing, they have already been discussed often enough, and on a few occasions with judicious insight.)

So much for the first and second points. But we now reach the third, and it is when handling the verbal subtleties of poetry that the translator is apt to come to grief or, at the best, to fall short of any perfectionist aims which he may cherish.

To begin, then, with word-melody.

It is obvious that in the process of turning a poem from one language into another the actual sounds of a poem, together with such musical effects as are produced by them, must almost inevitably undergo radical changes. What emerges must be different, admirable perhaps in its way, but different.

Nevertheless, a skilful translator can sometimes contrive to keep these discrepancies within fairly narrow bounds. Thus, John Payne (an unduly neglected master of this craft), in his rendering of Gautier's "L'Art", achieved this by concentrating on the rhymes. The first stanza illustrates his contrivance:

> Oui, l'oeuvre sort plus belle
> D'une forme au travail Rebelle,
> Vers, marbre, onyx, émail.
>
> The work that most excels,
> From stuff that 'gainst the tool Rebels
> Comes: verse, gem, marble, buhl.

Here, the superficial similarity of the two languages has met the translator half-way, so to speak. But a more striking example of this device which lacked the benefit of any such linguistic correspondences and is therefore a signal triumph of virtuosity, will be found in K. Dostál-Lutinov's Czech translation of select passages from Dante, in which the rhymes are nearly all identical with those in the original Italian. A short quotation must suffice to illustrate this, and I select the opening lines of the "Inferno":

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi retrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarrita —

Kde půle cesty života nás vítá,
mne obkličila náhle lesní chmura,
kde cesta přímá v houšti byla skryta —

— and so on, right through, the Italian rhyming words sospetto, detto, intelletto, ira, aggira, spira, bassa, lassa, etc., being matched by kleto, této, léto, círa, sbírá, sírá, chasa and střásá. These verbal acrobatics are kept up for hundreds of lines and constitute a feat which may fairly be regarded as unique. In the ordinary way the most that the translator, by luck or cunning, can hope to bring about, is an occasional faint echo of what the original poem sounds like. It therefore follows that a poem in which the leading qualities come to a head in the word-music will be translatable only to a very approximate extent, as the works of Mallarmé, Rilke and Blok abundantly testify.

Poetic diction, too, will confront the translator with predicaments which cannot always be fully overcome. Much depends upon his acquaintance with the niceties of the language from which he is translating, although I concede that intuition or some irrational sense of poetic values may help to redeem his shortcomings in this respect.

This, again, raises the question as to how far the qualities of poetry in a foreign language can be rightly assessed. It would lead too far to pursue this problem here, and I will confine myself to placing on record the odd facts that between the covers of "Les Fleurs du Mal" will be found a translation from Longfellow's "Hiawatha", that Rilke translated the "Sonnets from the Portuguese" (with no disrespect to Mrs. Browning, it is curious that Rilke of all poets should have thought her worth translating), and that Stefan George translated "The Child's First Grief" (that, I think, is the English title) by Mrs. Hemans. He did so in his early years, it is true, but the circumstance is a surprising one, just the same . . .

The translator must be equipped for his task partly as linguist, partly as poet. Of these two faculties, the latter is clearly the more important.

As I have suggested, intuition or something akin to it may help to make up for any linguistic imperfections which may handicap him. Or, to put it another way, if with him the translating of a poem is something more elemental than a luke-warm scholarly exercise, the chances are that he will be sensitive enough to detect the linguistic peculiarities of the original. On the other hand, linguistic accomplishment not adequately reinforced by poetical faculty will never engender anything more vital than a luke-warm scholarly exercise.

The translator of a poem is concerned with its general style and if his version, as a whole, produces an effect analogous to that of the original, as a whole, he will have reason to be satisfied.

He may encounter isolated words or phrases which stand out so conspicuously that he must ransack his native language for equivalents as close as it will yield to him. How far he succeeds in this may depend on mere chance. But it is worth noting that Rossetti contrived to hit upon "the snows of yesteryear" as a rendering of "les neiges d'antan", whereas someone else, less creatively gifted, could devise nothing better than "last year's snow".

Still, a translator who, having exhausted his resources, fails to do justice to some such distinctive feature of a poem, may feel inclined to redress the balance by elaborating the phraseology elsewhere. Within limits this course is legitimate enough. But there is always a danger that the original will be falsified by over-elaboration:—

> Nay! I'll recant. Swear as by right,
> love, and I'll be your acolyte.

Few readers, I imagine, will identify this as a quotation from Heine:—

> O schwöre, Liebchen, immerfort,
> ich glaube dir aufs blosse Wort.

Again, from the same translator:—

> In May, the wonder-lovely month
> beyond the forest-choir
> You heard my unrequited voice,
> O bird of my desire,

— which is a rendering of

> Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
> Als alle Vögel sangen,
> Da hab ich ihr gestanden
> Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.

There is much more on the same level, but these samples are enough. Such pretty-pretty verbal arabesques which smack of affectation and bogus artistry give a wholly wrong idea of Heine who, especially in these particular poems, wields a vocabulary familiar to the average cab-driver.

The difficulties involved by unusual poetic diction are not so formidable as those due to the subtleties of word-music, but they can be extremely baffling. Shakespeare, with his highly individual style, springing from a creative mastery of language unmatched in the annals of poetry, provides a classic instance of this, and his translators probably have to grapple with quandaries more crucial than those occurring in the works of any other poet. But the manner in which Shakespeare has fared at the hands of his translators, though of absorbing interest, cannot be dwelt upon here.

A poetical translation ought to read like an original. Not only that, but the translator should aim at the wording which the original poet might conceivably have adopted if he had written in English.

This implies a high standard of fidelity. All the same it is the final result which counts, and therefore a translation which, though free, achieves distinction, will always be preferable to one that is close but heavy-footed. As a rule, not many readers will be acquainted with the original, but other things being equal, the finest translation is one which will stand the test of a careful comparison with the original.

At this point the following passage from the diary of John Addington Symonds is worth quoting:

> Venice, Nov. 1, 1888.
>
> . . . Browning's theory of translation. Ought to be absolutely literal, with exact rendering of words, and words placed in the order of the original. Only a rendering of this sort gives any real insight into the original. Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam", a fine English poem, but no translation . . .

I cannot help wondering whether this represents precisely what Browning said. "Words placed in the order of the original" seems to be rather an excessive postulate, although it perhaps helps to explain why Browning's versions of Greek plays failed to meet with Professor Saintsbury's approval.

Still, apart from that, I concur. The translator of a poem is not entitled to tamper with the original. He should omit nothing essential. He must add nothing extraneous. It is primarily by his unsubstantiated additions that the mediocre or slovenly translator betrays himself. Frequently he indulges in them merely to engineer a rhyme which would otherwise elude him. The adroit translator is never reduced to such shift as that. His skill in this respect may be described as a knack, just as juggling with billiard balls is a knack. But I am bound to admit

that the exercise of this knack tends to limit the range of possible rhymes available to the translator. This is the one flaw which an English translator of poetry, however deft, cannot altogether avoid.

Moreover, even eminent translators are too often guilty of scamping their work by the illicit insertion of words for the sake of rhymes. I content myself with one instance — the opening couplet of Verlaine's "Colloque Sentimental" as translated by Arthur Symons:

> In the old park, solitary and vast,
> Over the frozen ground two forms once passed.

The corresponding French runs:

> Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé
> Deux formes ont tout a l'heure passé.

It will be seen that there is nothing whatever to justify the epithet "vast", the only function of which is to furnish a facile rhyme. Dowson managed a little better:

> Into the lonely park all frozen fast,
> A while ago there were two forms who passed

— although he, in his turn, sacrificed the epithet "vieux". But I maintain that to leave something out is less heinous than to put something in. And indeed, Dowson's four translations from "Verlaine", in spite of a few ninetyish mannerisms, will pass all except a somewhat exacting test.

To some this may appear much ado about a mere monosyllabic extra. But that is to miss the point. The mere monosyllable is a symptom of perfunctory translation. I could quote many other cases of this malpractice, perpetrated often enough, or rather, too often, by culprits with well-known names. However, I have already established the principle at issue, and there is no need, here at least, to draw up a detailed indictment.

Instead, and in conclusion, I suggest that every metrical rendering of a poem should be accompanied by a word-for-word version in prose.

LAUREL

A laurel to Dorian Cooke, author of a poem on William Wordsworth published in *The Poetry Review*. He shared the second prize of 200 dollars given by *Poetry Awards 1952,* an American Annual published in Pennsylvania and London (Geoffrey Cumberlege). Another whose poem was reproduced in the anthology is Geoffrey Johnson.

Contributors to *The Poetry Review* may be assured that their work in these pages will be brought to the notice of the Editor of *Poetry Awards*, but if they wish to submit their published work direct, the address of the annual is Box 388, Occidental College, Los Angeles 41, California.

EDITORIAL LETTER-BOX

"NOTES FOR NEWCOMERS"

Gentlemen — "What is gained," asks the Editorial Staff in the October-December issue, "by printing titles and the initial letter of every verse line in small type?" Evidently not favour from them.

But let Milton suggest an answer. Appendix (a) of the Oxford Milton shows how in the Cambridge autograph MS of *On Time* only two of the twenty-two lines (the first and the last) start with a capital. In this particular instance — the MS incidentally has but four commas and one (end) full stop, while contractions are common, including the ampersand nine times out of ten — there was for me a very definite gain.

There's nothing very recent about such a practice — found, for instance, in D. H. Lawrence's "Bavarian Gentians", and in certain poems in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (*1936*). A correspondent in the *Times Literary Supplement*, has reminded us that the growing practice is but a revival from much earlier times.

Being a poet who sometimes sets his pieces down that way, I should like, in this reprint of a little poem from *Berkeley* (U.S.A.), entitled "Quintessence," to show how the sense may depend on doing so. An initial capital for line five would alter the meaning:

Once I wanted to alter everything,
but now that it is altered I am too.
What with dark daylight, wasps without a sting,
a spineless cactus, and unloving man,
self's against Self, thingness divorced from Thing,
and Essence nullified by inessentials.
Once I wanted to alter everything.
Now everything is altered. I'm that thing.

TERENCE HEYWOOD

ON RHYMES

Dear Sirs — As one of the Vice-Presidents of The Poetry Society, may I suggest to Dr. Stopes that it takes *two* end-words to make a rhyme? If the rhyme is not "fresh and original" then surely it means that the true craftsman's test has not been applied and any alternative word used to complete the rhyme so long as it sounds right. The first of the two words may be allowed however hackneyed, but the second can usually be one that avoids commonplace — unless it is inevitable and therefore irreplaceable.

ANOTHER VICE-PRESIDENT

PERHAPS

Gentlemen — Would you agree with a critic, Giles Romilly, in a recent issue of *The Observer*, that the following poem, "The Chimeras", by W. H. Auden, "the most brilliant single contribution to this (P.E.N.) anthology", is "perhaps one of the most remarkable poems of the last few years":—

> Curious from wantonness — to see what they are like,
> Cruel from fear — to put a stop to them,
> Incredulous from conceit — to prove they cannot be,
>
> We stroke or kick or measure and are lost:
> The stronger we are the sooner all is over;
> It is our strength with which they gobble us up.

"Dazzlingly unparaphrasable" though the critic thinks it, we must allow that he did say *perhaps*.

JOHN TAYLOR

Liverpool.

THE FALL OF THE MUSES

Gentlemen — I should be untrue indeed to the cause of poetry if I did not offer my appreciation of Lord Dunsany's poignant article "The Fall of the Muses," especially after reading the Rev. F. Pratt Green's rejoinder.

What a mistake we have made in welcoming those writers of metaphysical analyses whose works are not poetry at all, but nothing but weak and peculiar prose. Every fibre of poetical value is missed; the use of the symbol is frequently exchanged for the *plain word;* dogmatic assertion takes the place of suggestion and inference; metre is discarded or despised; rhyme violated.

But far more destructive than these matters of outer apparel is the mischievous spirit of soul-annihilation and the rebellion against noble thoughts that pervades these pathetic documents. The undoubted moral force of poetic verse once conveyed in elegies and tributes to famous men; in threnodies after disaster; in odes on courage or the appreciation of self-sacrifice: this is largely missing to-day, and will only be found in a belated return to the classic forms.

Beauty befouled is knighthood's cause indeed — Lord Dunsany's cause. Poetry stands now at the crossroads. The masses ignore it because of the moderns. I can remember the time when working men would quote with vigour and enthusiasm from Campbell or Tennyson, as words of dignity would mingle with their thoughts. Let us return to the noble language of a classic art, and much good will follow.

ARTHUR ROW

Hereford.

HACKNEYED SUBJECTS

Dear Sirs — As John Ruskin said a hundred years ago, the ordinary reader of poetry wishes to be told about things he knows nothing about, and not of those he knows about already.

Stepping from the train at my local station one evening I found the air full of the song of nightingales, so loud that the station staff, who lived near, told me they could hardly sleep at night because of them. Therefore I do not want to hear of the song of nightingales — I know all about it!

On the other hand I like Roy Campbell to tell me of galloping horses, because I have never seen them.

G. W. M. BOYCOTT

Sussex.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.—Is not our correspondent confusing the poet's choice of subjects and the way he writes about them? If the nightingale is no longer to be his subject, neither is woman! Yes, let us be original, but in our reactions as poets. Edith Sitwell did not refrain from writing about the dawn — as hackneyed a subject as the nightingale, surely! She wrote differently: "The morning light creaks down again." By the way, *did* Ruskin say what you say he said?

BOOKS RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude its subsequent review)

An Italian Visit, by C. Day Lewis (Cape, 7s. 6d.).
Joy and Verity, by Marie C. Stopes (Hogarth Press, 6s.).
Divided Image, a study of Blake and Yeats by Margaret Rudd (Routledge, 18s.).
Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter, by Federico Garcia Lorca, translated by A. L. Lloyd (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.).
Kentish Fire, by Kunigunde Duncan (Bruce Humphries, $2.50).
Selected Poems, by Wallace Stevens (Faber and Faber, 12s. 6d.).
Shenstone's Miscellany, 1759–1763. Edited by Ian Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 21s.).
The Metaphysical Passion, by Sona Raiziss (Pennsylvania University Press, 40s.).
Poetical Works of Robert Bridges (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.).
The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, by E. D. H. Johnson (Princeton University Press, 25s.)
Dorchester, by G. N. (Savile Press, 7s. 6d.).
T. S. Eliot, a Bibliography, by Donald Gallup (Faber, 25s.).
Lord Oxford and the Shakespeare Group, by Montagu W. Douglas (Alden Press, Oxford, 8s. 6d.).
The Dragon and the Unicorn by, Kenneth Rexroth (New Directions, Norfolk, Connecticut, 3 dollars).
Elizabethan Lyrics, Edited by Kenneth Muir (Harrap, 10s. 6d.).
Lyrical Meditations on the Paradiso, by Georgina Grace Moncrieff (Moray Press, 10s. 6d.).
The Romantic Poets, by Graham Hough. Hutchinson's University Library (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.).
Sophocles' Dramas, translated by Sir George Young. Everyman's Library (Dent, 7s.).
Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century. Everyman's Library (Dent, 7s.).
Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, edited by John Warrington. Everyman's Library (Dent, 6s.).
The Elements of Death, by Jocelyn Brooke, *Within the Tavern Court*, by R. L. Cook, *Twenty-three Poems*, by R. H. Ward, *Wandering Pilgrimage*, by Ursula Wood, *Poems in Pamphlet*, (The Hand and Flower Press, 1s. each).

Book Reviews . . .

DYLAN THOMAS YES AND NO
TWO REVIEWS OF ONE BOOK

Controversy has raged like a snowstorm since the early winter in literary and artistic circles. "Collected Poems 1934–1952," by Dylan Thomas (Dent, 12s. 6d.), has been acclaimed the book of the year and awarded the Foyle Prize of £250.

But this seemingly favourable reception has not been unanimous — far from it — and the feeling aroused for and against has led the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* to take a unique step in book-reviewing. They have requested two members of the Board, widely divergent in their attitudes to poetry, to contribute reviews, candid — independent — and unknown to each other. Their responses follow, and readers are invited to comment on them for subsequent publication, in brief essays of not more than 200 words.

I

THE INTERIOR LIFE

During a recent evening at Portman Square, Monsieur René Darin, Cultural Counsellor to the French Embassy, remarked in a brilliant commentary on English and French poetry that to a Frenchman there is a clear affinity in all English poetry from Beowulf to Dylan Thomas.

The inability to recognize the inheritance in a modern writer is not only an English characteristic nor peculiar to this age. The grudging and partial recognition of Dylan Thomas as a poet can be compared with the same failure in the case of Ezra Pound. Pound, the scholar with the chilled mathematical rune; Thomas, the Celt, with a song.

The work of Ezra Pound exhibits a structure with calculated beam and stress, the frame filled in with the material of his experience and from prodigious diggings in the mines of forgotten scholarship. There is this unity in all he has written because it flows from an integrated source — the architect is clear as to his purpose.

With Dylan Thomas the work comes from the one person who is many persons, whose work may even prove to reflect all persons. It is the projection of a personality in process of finding universality, not only in many people but in all the stratas of consciousness of one human being — the poet himself.

To a great extent he is, of course, unreadable at a first scanning and impenetrable at a first hearing, but the reward is all the greater when repetitive familiarity allows contact to be made. Then comes a close and personal identification, and the living word expresses life.

It is the reader soaked in the traditional English style who finds him the more incomprehensible. Perhaps the reason is that the traditionalist brings into play and relationship only that compartment of his mind labelled "Poetry". The uninitiated relate him by association and comparison with personal experience and the word-images often seem to focus astonishingly, obtaining an unmistakable response.

Can Dylan Thomas be fully understood with all the charged meaning of his selected expression? When, biographically, letters and scholarship have had their day with his life and work, there is no doubt that much that is now half-hidden and obscure will be made plain. He is the child of his nation, conditioned, as all of us, by his hereditary equipment and contained within the period of his life. These collected poems are as revealing and rewarding as any Freudian analytical sheaf, but precisely compressed by an expert in mood; not, be it noted by a moody expert, for he is, essentially, a singer and his writings must be spoken aloud. They are songs of a disquiet world wherein pretence and prettiness, the façade of good-will, the camouflage of living for to-day, the inherent Micawber-hope for the future, are discounted or discarded; and life as it is for the poet, is sung in complex, intricately-conceived imagery.

He is not imitative, save in the sense of heritage; seldom slipshod unless it is called so when words cannot encompass his full meaning; in all respects honest, for he is none other than himself; a master of his craft, yet sometimes the slave of his wordy invention; as much a reviver of language as Christopher Fry, a Donne to his Marlowe; and achieving so often "that momentary peace which is a poem".

To understand that part of his work which is truly difficult, the same intuitive study is required as for any other unusual work of art. The image in a couple of words playing on one's mind may unravel into the images of association and contradiction that went to its making. The vision in a single line, particularly a "first" line, living for a time in one's life, will inevitably bring the desire to know the second — and then the third:

"Altarwise by owl-light in the half-way house";
"Where once the waters of your face Spun to my screws . . .";
"Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month";
"When all my five and country senses see";
"I turn the corner of prayer and burn";
"Do not go gentle into that good night";
"On almost the incendiary eve";
"Never until the mankind making";
"A grief ago";
"The force that through the green fuse drives the flower";
"I, in my intricate image, stride in two levels";
"Our eunuch dreams, all seedless in the light";

For whom does Dylan Thomas write? — "For the love of man," he avows, "and in praise of God."

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms,
I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread
Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart.

The emotive basis of life remains constant. Beauty, truth, and love have been hymned with lyrical simplicity. Must poetry remain the only art graven in the cere cloths of its past?

The mobile lyricism of water can connote, to a modern mind, the elements capable of devastating a city or animating the industry of a nation. Shall the poet of to-day disdain the prospect of civilization and culture in eruption and contemplate waterfalls?

Biologically, the theme of love is not for song, but any emotion transmuted by the human mind has its own dignity and beauty. Must it always be disguised in voluminous Victorian petticoats so that the shades of our ancestors will not be affronted?

Must a modern poem be embraced at a glance and its memory loiter for but a thought or two?

It is true, of course, that the unusual or complex art statement may be as phoney as that made by any street-market medicine vendor, but the generalized simplicity is equally unreal and false.

The mind does not consist wholly of Freudian caverns of recessive and repulsive night. The imagination can also play within the fantasies and intricacies of palaces of great beauty and delight.

With their heritage behind them, poets, still alive, will express themselves in the terms of the age in which they live. If they are not read, if no effort is made to understand their message and their song, then we relinquish our destiny and deserve our fate.

JOHN GRADDON

II

THE ACID TEST

Much as I value time, I have spent a week of evenings in a sincere attempt to discover why there has been such a chorus of eulogy lavished on this book. After such a whirl of words from poet and panegyrists I could coolly retort, as Nym did to Pistol's hyperboles, "I am not Barbason: you cannot conjure me."

But my response, I hope, goes deeper: it is that a poet, however much obscured by rant and bombast, is there right enough in Dylan Thomas, but that he is being done a vicious disservice by flatterers who belaud him to the skies for the wrongest of reasons.

Has there not been an overswing of the pendulum? Poetry-readers, justifiably sick to death of the thin-lipped and intellectualized verse we have had foisted on us, have been too eager to acclaim any sign of its opposite — the sensuous, the sensual, the rhapsodically romantic, in current jargon the visceral, or even the apocalyptic. The dissolution of almost all critical standards by two world wars, and the consequent decadence, hankering for novelty at whatever cost, have contributed further to this over-praise bordering on idolatry. To get away from the fevers of the moment, and to take a sane long look into the future, is this poet likely to release in real achievement his obviously powerful lyrical potential, or will he be, largely as a result of this age's encouragement of his worst verbal excesses, a pathetic warning in some unborn Isaac D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature?

In the first place, his output is not large, nor is it varied. It is monotonously egocentric, and nearly all of it written at the top of the voice; much of it looks

backward to childhood, a tendency, which in much greater writers like Wordsworth and Barrie is by the same critics vehemently denounced. A hallmark of a major poet is fecundity of ideas, variety of theme, range and vision; the "I", as in Hardy, is a mask through which the poet speaks, and speaks intelligibly with largeness and nobility of utterance to and for all men; it is never the merely subjective and personal pronoun. Except in a handful of poems, already too much eulogized and anthologized, this major quality seems to be missing. After all the cauls, wombs, processes of parturition and "I smelt the maggot in my stool", it seems that this writer has discovered two truths, that we all have sexual organs and that we shall most assuredly die.

It certainly cannot be for his matter, over-sexed and death-obsessed as our age is, that he is so belauded; it can only be due to that other disease in modern criticism, its neurotic pre-occupation with idiosyncrasy of manner. My contention is that any style which draws attention to itself, to style as such, is bad style, and the less obtrusive it is, as in dress, the better. This extravagant disproportion of idea to the clothing of language, the solemn flamboyance that is entirely humourless is no new phenomenon. But let the quietly-laughing Prince of Poets (in Hamlet, the Players, Act ii) speak on the subject:

> Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
> In general synod take away her power,
> Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel
> And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
> As low as to the fiends . . .

This tongue-in-the-cheek hyperbole, even at a distance of three centuries and despite the obstacles of language-changes during that time, make, for me at least, more poetic sense than the following, one of many passages composed in all seriousness and in what is or should be in the immediacy of contemporary idiom:—

> Altarwise by owl-light in the half-way house
> The gentleman lay graveward with his furies;
> Abaddon in the hangnail cracked from Adam,
> And, from his fork, a dog among the fairies,
> The atlas-eater with a jaw for news,
> Bit out the mandrake with to-morrow's scream . . .

Shakespeare writes bombast and knows it; Mr. Thomas writes bombast and doesn't. That is the difference.

To apply the Arnoldian touchstone-passage method further, let us place beside the magical "When the hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces" of the despised Swinburne, and by no means a favourite poet of mine, any of the writer's rhapsodical Nature poems, even "Over Sir John's hill", and the descent in quality is obvious. Both poems are born of that fine excess which soars up to the edge and almost tumbles into nonsense, but the first is intellectually controlled and articulated, memorably and inevitably said; the second is a loose association of impassioned words trusting to luck and chance alliteration for psychological linkage with the reader.

Now to our own day. The poet who resembles Dylan Thomas most in rich endowment of awareness to sounds, colours and smells, in fiery impetus and

imagistic exuberance, is Roy Campbell, some of whose best work was composed approximately at the same age. Irrespective of traditionalism or any other "ism", let us judge between poetry in the raw and poetry triumphantly achieved, by comparing two poems of roughly the same length, "And Death shall have no Dominion" with "I love to see, when leaves depart". Or take Christopher Fry, whose imagery is just as original, often as extravagant, but always contrives to be vastly more intelligible than "In the White Giant's Thigh". Just one more example: "A Refusal to mourn the Death, by fire, of a Child in London," which has been breathed more than once from the Radio as if from Apollo's holy of holies. This poem is certainly much above the ordinary, despite its awkward and affected title, despite its opening broken-backed thirteen lines without a single stop or comma, despite all sorts of uneasiness about what on earth entering "the round Zion of the waterbead" or sowing "my salt seed in the least valley of sackcloth" can mean, and above all despite the doubts whether a poet can be truly moved and so elaborately ingenious in verbal artifice at the same time. Let us then turn to "The Children" from the *Expectant Silence* of William Soutar, a Scotch poet who died in 1943. The first is inadequately realized and vaguely concluded; it is personal and local; the second is beautifully disciplined and without obvious artifice; it is as lucid as running water; it is also impersonal and cosmic; it speaks for all bombed children.

I leave out of account this collection's Dali-esque dither and dazzle, its surrealistic and often nightmarish inconsequence, its usual bag of modernistic tricks — the Owenesque off-rhyme, the internal jingle, the displacement of true rhyme by what is cacophonous and barbarous (flesh bit, ashpit), the Hopkins-like splutters and explosions, the strained-for perversions of normal speech (Once *below* a time), the naive device, revived from Apollinaire, of printing verse in the shapes of tiles, lozenges and hatchets; for all these dodges are already on the way to the limbo where they belong. What I am concerned about is my inability to grasp for more than a line or so what really matters, the poet at the core of the welter. A glorious roar of sound intermixed with clashing pebbles of words, with flying foams and spumes of half-sense, is what all genuine poets emotionally experience before authentic creation can begin. But this sensory or visceral excitement, though indispensable, is not enough, not nearly enough. It is in the assembling, the co-ordinating, the giving of significant shape, coherence and beauty to these half-impressions and half-intuitions that the real art of poetry is seen. I am frankly bewildered by this failure of mine to find here this higher quality of the Poet (or Maker). That is, except in those infrequent comparative lulls in the verbal hurricane, where the writer is at his clearest and best, for example, "The force that through . . ." "This bread I break," "The hand that signed the paper." Hotspur's gibe at this perplexity in not comprehending another's language is witty enough —

I think there is no man speaks better Welsh,

— but it will not do for me. What I honestly want to know is why, as a scholar, as one who is not unacquainted practically with the intricacies and ardours of verse-composition, and after a week of evening readings with a headache at the end, and not a single line of this volume left memorably ringing in my mind, I can get more sense out of an Anglo-Saxon riddle in the Exeter book than I can from scores of passages of which this is a fair example:—

This story's monster has a serpent caul,
Blind in the coil scrams round the blazing outline,
Measures his own length on the garden wall
And breaks his shell in the last shocked beginning;
A crocodile before the chrysalis,
Before the fall from love the flying heartbone,
Winged like a sabbath ass this children's piece
Uncredited blows Jericho on Eden.

Mine is far from being the despairing cry of a paraphasing fourth-former; for no poem of any worth can be paraphrased. But surely we may ask what the general drift of many a poem in this collection can be? For me at least Mr. Thomas's means of communication are almost always ineffective, and communication is the essence and ultimate criterion of art in any form.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

BUY A LILY

The White Goddess, a historical grammar of poetic myth, by Robert Graves (Faber, 35s.).

An ancient Chinese proverb seems peculiarly encouraging to the prospective readers of a book so scholarly, profound, startling and enthralling as this:—"If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily." Indeed, the present reviewer reduced to a minimum the daily bread of domesticity and sleep and labour, and exchanged for them without regret or qualm the pursuit of the Muse of Poetry, the White Goddess, through the tangled thickets of time and reason, guided bravely by the light of Robert Graves's magic lantern.

Magical it must seem even to scholars to whom the manifold subjects are not wholly unknown, as they are in larger part unknown to most readers. Folklore, legend, mythology, religion — a poet's light illuming the confusion. That there is an end, a focus, a place of rest for the mind after the labyrinth, is in itself little short of marvellous; I would quote, for the consolation of the uninitiated, from the chapter entitled "The Single Poetic Theme":

Let him who seeks continue until he find.
When he has found, he shall wonder.
When he has wondered, he shall reign.
When he has reigned, he shall rest.

Clearly this is a book for every poet and student of poetry. Let the author describe it in his own words:—

> European poetic lore is, indeed, ultimately based on magical principles, the rudiments of which formed a close religious secret for centuries but which were at last garbled, discredited and forgotten. Now it is only by rare accidents of spiritual regression that poets make their lines magically potent in the ancient sense. Otherwise, the contemporary practice of poem-writing recalls the medieval alchemist's fantastic and foredoomed experiments in transmuting base metal into gold; except that the alchemist did at least recognize pure gold when he saw and handled it. The truth is that only gold can be turned into gold; only poetry into poems. This book is about the rediscovery of the lost rudiments, and about the active principles of poetic magic that govern them.

C.M.C.

PARAGRAPHS REGAINED

By YORKE CROMPTON

The Poetical Works of John Milton, Vol. 1: Paradise Lost. Edited by Helen Darbishire (Oxford University Press, 30s.).

A hundred and fifty years ago Keats was the only major poet who doubted Milton. And Keats revised "Hyperion" in an attempt to exorcise from it the spirit of Milton's idiom, which he had come to regard as a majestic poltergeist that moved the syntactic furniture around his sentences without the owner's will. Thus he created among his modern readers, according to which version they preferred, two rival societies of medium-breakers who, like Swift's Big-Enders and Little-Enders in the opening of eggs, belabour each other with a kind of thoughtful violence. For Milton's eminence is now less stable. Some of our greater poets still regard his breathless pinnacle of language as a shrine; others view it with a distaste usually reserved for the Albert Memorial.

Ezra Pound, examining finger-prints in Milton's belfry, concluded that his *vox humana* had been sustained by certain poetic organ-blowers from Provence. T. S. Eliot ended his inquisition into Milton's psyche by assuring us, with a sigh, that the study of Milton would not really injure a young poet now. True. As little would a young student of Gothic architecture be injured by noticing that a cathedral had been built at Chartres.

Now, therefore, is the moment for anything of importance on Milton to appear. Many of us, no doubt, have spent anxious nights wondering what "Paradise Lost" would have been like if the poet had been able to correct the proofs with his full vision. In this text, that is what Helen Darbishire essays to show us. It is the converse of that odd edition of Bentley's, published in 1732, which left out long sequences on the ground that they might have been smuggled in by someone who wished to take advantage of the author's blindness! She has performed her task with conscientious care; and for the reference of scholars it is satisfactory to have the text that Milton probably intended, down to his own paragraphs and spelling.

On the other hand, the reader who merely loves poetry, when his eye is confronted with such obstacle races as "thir Straw-built Cittadel New rubd with Baume", may well turn to his Masson or his Everyman edition for relief. But even he may gain, from the prominence now given to the place-names that Milton so passionately dwelt on, a little more of what Flaubert called "the historic shudder". More vividly than ever he can watch the poet, in his geographic nympholepsy, pursue each name through the gazeteers of his imagination till he rolls it from his tongue with the ecstasy of a successful love.

CHARACTER OF POETS

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

Lord Byron: Christian Virtues, by G. Wilson Knight (Routledge, 30s.).

Robert Browning, by J. M. Cohen (Longmans, 10s. 6d.).

Francis Thompson and Wilfrid Meynell, by Viola Meynell (Hollis and Carter, 18s.).

Byron and Browning: two poets in two different ages born, immortal, but subject to moral appraisal in succeeding generations by critics, biographers and gossips. Then we have Francis Thompson and Alice Meynell on lower shelves of the library; people have to read more of their poetry before they can become curious as to their lives.

Wilson Knight, who places Byron next to Shakespeare and almost next to the Almighty, sets out to refute almost everything that has ever been said against his hero poet. He succeeds. Many jaded pedants have disliked the poet who "did not care for grammar at a push" and Knight shakes them till their fallacies fall to the floor. Byron as a poseur is faithfully dealt with, and the simulacrum has been exorcised . . . "A dandy of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Instead of the dandy of sorrows you have the man who swam the Hellespont, an athlete and one who was always ready to box three rounds with anyone in the room.

This is quite a book. It is all done in scholarly fashion by chapter and verse, and the references in the text almost exceed the text itself. If one has any doubts about Byron he had better read Childe Harold again and then dip into Wilson Knight.

Of course the poetry is the man. The inspection of bedlinen is very vulgar, and so is the buzzing about mistresses and unpaid bills. Biography nowadays is not written for the young but for the morbid elderly, the disillusioned, those who have made a mess of their own lives and those who detest the traditions of their country. The cult of debunking great men has produced a new kind of fog and thousands are dying. Bunkers Hill lost us America, and Debunkers Hill is losing England. The Carlyle soot is still falling. Byron soot and Browning soot still obscure majestic ranges of poetry.

There is a line of Robert Browning which could be spelt to mean his advice to a biographer, *Leave the fire ashes, what remains is gold!* The poetry is the gold. "*That,* he was worth to God," and *that* he was and is worth to us. In J. M. Cohen's attractive little book on the poet we read that Browning after his "lyric love" had died did wish to marry Lady Ashburton, but it would be absurd to imagine that that implied a sort of backsliding, a denial of the permanence of his idealistic union with Elizabeth Barrett or a flaw in the poet's soul.

Mr. Cohen's volume in Longman's *Men & Books* series, blending biographical detail with literary appreciation is in good taste throughout and some of its value lies in the uncovering of a few lovely passages hidden amid more obscure versification. The spotlight is on the poetry. The fashion in literature changes but there is a hidden public reading and adoring Browning all the while.

Francis Thompson does not mean as much, but it may be said that *The Hound of Heaven* proves Thompson's immortality. That he took opium for fifteen years is merely a detail for a study of narcotic drugs as they affect literary style. G. K. Chesterton once said that it would be surprising if dyspepsia were a recipe for making *Sartor Resartus*. The same could be said of opium. It is futile to take opium in order to write a new *Kubla Khan*. Viola Meynell's memoir proves to be a discursive story of her family and Thompson and the literary world of the nineties. It is the Henley period and evening stars glitter in the twilight of the long Victorian day. Francis Thompson died in 1907, and not long before then had written

> Behold that I am like a fountained nymph
> . . . A Thirst made marble . . .

FROM PORTUGAL

The Oxford Book of Portuguese Verse, XIIth Century–XXth Century. Second Edition edited by B. Vidigal (Qxford University Press, 15s.).

The first edition of *The Oxford Book of Portuguese Verse* was edited by the late A. F. G. Bell in 1925. The new edition remains faithful to Mr. Bell's excellent taste as far as the latter end of the nineteenth century, and its main interest as a new publication lies, therefore, in the poets who have been selected to represent the last fifty years. There is indeed one notable new poet of an earlier generation, Cesário Verde (1855–86), whose single *Livro* was published in 1901, though his fame dates only from the edition of 1945. He and Antonio Nobre (1867–1900) now stand together at the gate of modern Portuguese poetry.

But the poet of most consequence for to-day, is with little doubt, Fernando Pessoa (1888–1935), whose influence over the younger generation in Portugal has been not less than, though very different from, that of García Lorca in Spain. Only one volume appeared during Pessoa's lifetime; the rest has been (and is still being) gathered from ephemeral publications and the poet's own papers. Although his picture is for us still not complete, the range of his work is seen in the various personæ he assumed. It is a pity that "Alvaro de Campos", "Alberto Caeiro" and "Ricardo Reis" are represented each by only one poem: the "Fernando Pessoa" of *Mensagem* is of less immediate interest to the foreign reader.

H. V. LOVEMORE.

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

MAINLY WOMEN

The Year One, by Kathleen Raine (Hamish Hamilton, 7s. 6d.).
Walking Under Water, by Dannie Abse (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.).
Passing Hours, by Lady Wentworth (George Ronald, Oxford, 5s.).
Up Dale, by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe (Nelson, 10s. 6d.).
The Life of Mary, by Rainer Maria Rilke (Oliver and Boyd, 6s.).
The Mystic Chalice, by Dorothy Woodcock (Guild Press, Chesterfield, 2s. 6d.).

In her earlier volumes Kathleen Raine's work has been marked by a consciously cerebral quality that often obscured the poet's living personality; but in her fourth book emotional and imaginative expression have taken command. The allegiance now is not so much to art as a deliberate objective, but to nature — in the world about her (the craggy Border country) and in her own ancestral instinctive promptings — and the result is felt and heard in a richer and more heart-sprung music. These poems give a sense of the soil stirring, of heaving seas and windblown fields and fells; but what stirs most perceptibly and beautifully is the creative passion of love in a woman's heart. The forms employed in this distinguished book are mainly lyrical, but never derivative-traditional or extreme modernist. Truly Miss Raine has hearkened to her own spirit's cry:

Let in the fire,
Let in the power,
Let in the invading might.

To come to a poet completely dissimilar in inspiration and method, Dannie Abse, like Dr. Alex Comfort, combines the medical profession with the practice of verse; and, again like that gifted writer, he has a remarkably nimble perception of people, processes and things, expressed with enviable powers of verbal communication. In *Walking Under Water* he speaks of "the thin malevolent sunlight of seven o'clock", which seems to have a cousinship with "the damp souls of housemaids"; while in a poem to Van Gogh (expected from any poet visiting Arles) he remarks, "where you crucified sex in tubes, the oil running out of you in praise of sunlight." Sunlight and mirrors (many mirrors), dolls and murders and marriages, test-tubes and toothpaste, are only a few of Mr. Abse's effects. He is a prestidigitateur of words, immensely stimulating and entertaining, commenting with *New Yorker* wit and pungency on any facet of life and death that attracts his mind's eye. He should be read but not imitated.

Passing from Mr. Abse to Byron's great-granddaughter Lady Wentworth is like leaving the Palladium and Danny Kaye for the Albert Hall and a Handelian contralto. In *Passing Hours* Lady Wentworth shows a superbly sure verse techn que in traditional forms and "traditional" thought. Whether she writes of a spaniel, a butterfly, fairies, a dancer or on "Art's Insanity" her verse is always perfectly measured and marmoreal, the sonnets in particular moving strongly and impeccably to their sonorous last lines. And yet something somehow is not there, something which can best be called the accent of a compelling personality. The verse slides into place, but over all are the everlasting charms of poetic models deftly remembered. Longfellow's ghost, out walking on the sands of time, would, I feel sure, take as the sincerest form of flattery:

That those ambitions which we think sublime
Are dust upon the chariot wheels of Time.

What Burns was to the Lallans and William Barnes to "Darset" in their lifetime Dorothy Una Ratcliffe aspires to be to Yorkshire and the dales. One of the few contemporary dialect poets of quality, Miss Ratcliffe has gathered a surprisingly full and rewarding collection of her poems of dale scenes and characters. Seldom is a marginal gloss needed; the pieces are utterly comprehensible and many of them sing on in the recollection. This should be a "must" for Yorkshire book-buyers.

Although the German text is printed opposite to the English translation in N. K. Cruickshank's version of Rainer Maria Rilke's "Das Marien-Leben", *The Life of Mary*, (Oliver & Boyd), it can be of little interest to any but German scholars. One thing it makes clear, however, is that Miss Cruickshank has achieved a *metrical* fidelity; but not, for me, does she convey the mystical overtones of Rilke's concentrated meaning, — the content is there, but not the magic. Professor Jethro Bithell's Introduction (which does not discuss the translation) is a fine analysis of Rilke's sequence and his poetic equipment.

In her Foreword to *The Mystic Chalice*, by the late Dorothy Woodcock, (The Guild Press, Chesterfield), Lilian Roworth of the Nottingham Poetry Society stresses the author's delight in the natural beauties of the world, a delight she experienced even when her spirit had to muster all its reserves of courage. Miss Woodcock's verse is full of grace and simplicity and it is a fine act of comradeship that has collected so good a selection in so well-produced a book. The funds of the Nottingham Poetry Centre should benefit by a wide circulation of this posthumous volume.

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

FROM THE FRENCH

Poems of Baudelaire; Les Fleurs du Mal, translated by Roy Campbell (Harvill Press, 21s.).

Baudelaire has enjoyed a prolonged vogue on our side of the Channel, providing the kind of forbidden fruit for which the sport-loving Briton is supposed to have no appetite, being indeed quite unwholesome. His life was largely spent in the self-pity of a spoilt child for suffering induced by the deliberate cultivation of his own hysteria. The result was disgust, satiety, and final remorse, and he is a great poet by virtue of the last.

The candour of Mr. Campbell's introductory note is such as to disarm the critic, and forbid him to treat any of the translator's lapses with anything else than the kiss of pardon. "The portentously poetic" may not have been to Baudelaire's taste, but neither would Mr. Campbell's "cops" for policemen. And "to be as colloquial as possible" is not necessarily a virtue when you are translating a fastidious artist.

So many skilled pens have rendered Baudelaire since the congenial "naughty nineties" that it is natural to compare the new versions with the best already done. Those by Lord Alfred Douglas, Margaret Jourdain, and Eugene Mason may be cited, and these remain untoppled from their pedestals. Liberties taken by Mr. Campbell with his rhymes do not justify themselves in many of the sonnets, but he triumphs in "The Giantess", and in several others finds words as daring and as dazzling as those of the great original.

T.W.

I REMEMBER

100 Best Poems in the English Language, selected by Stephen Graham (Ernest Benn, 10s. 6d.).

To whom shall we offer our first congratulations on this excellent book, so neatly bound and printed, so pleasant to handle and so rich with the purest cream of poetry, skimmed for us by a Master-hand? Shall it be youth, sipping in wonder the new, eternal graces; or maturity, finding on every page a finer echo of its own experience; or age, holding in quietness the memory of sweetness and light that has outlasted noise and shadow?

Here is no mere collection of hackneyed favourites. It brings new nobility and loveliness into our homes, a sparkle of gaiety, and wealth of thought and feeling beyond the dreams of avarice. In the name of those to whom the poems are milestones on a long road, and whose "*I remember, I remember!*" sounds still a bright prelude, thank you, Stephen Graham, for a re-introduction to the music-makers in poetry — including Arthur William O'Shaughnessy:

> World-losers and world-forsakers
> On whom the pale moon gleams:
> Yet we are the movers and shakers
> Of the world for ever, it seems.

C.M.C.

FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON

Beowulf. A verse translation into Modern English by Edwin Morgan (The Hand and Flower Press, 12s. 6d.).

The sub-title is important. The aim is "to interest and at times excite the reader of poetry without misleading anyone who has no access to the original". Previous translations abound with archaisms, which presumably are thought to give the colour of the time (either of the original or the translation) and to preserve the heroic and, indeed, the epic quality of the narrative. The difficulty while rendering into realistic English verse is to avoid the descent into pedestrian prose. While confessing a personal preference for Gavin Bone in approach and as a translator of Anglo-Saxon poetry (his premature death in 1942 was a great loss), we regard it as of enormous importance that our beginnings both in poetry and as a nation are reviewed again and again. Here we have an excellent readable narrative. If there is little strain on the imagination there is none on the attention. The metre is stressed and the diction impeccable.

The Anglo-Saxon language, difficult and uncompromising as it was, could not produce "easy" poetry. The main feature was systematic alliteration, the line clogged with consonants, the words full of character, and it is perhaps impossible to think that the poetry can be extracted from the language in which it is written.

In spite of the harangues, the descriptive courtesies, and the general "linkage" of the narrative, the essential grandeur of the whole comes through even in translation — and the more unmistakably if read aloud.

J.G.

From America comes *Kentish Fire*, (Bruce Humphries, Boston, $2.50), by Kunigunde Duncan, a Kansas woman's sequence of thirty sonnets in the Shakespearian form and in praise of the aspiring human soul, whether in Kent or the Middle West. The thought is noble, the philosophy deep, and the language well wrought.

G.J.

REVIVING THE SPOKEN WORD

The Choir Speaks, W. G. Bebbington and E. N. Brown (Methuen).

Plato asks "Cannot a man remember and speak?" These two editors are to be encouraged for their love of poetry in general and their undoubted enthusiasm for chorus-speaking in particular. Anyone who makes an effective contribution to the restoration of the spoken word deserves our support.

The present selection is serviceable and calculated to be of assistance to choirs and their masters, or should one say English choirs — Since "in the beginning was the Word", one would have thought the eleven pages of extracts from the Bible would have been placed first and not last in the volume. These particular extracts are a meagre measure for a source that has done so much, indeed has been one of the parents of chorus-speaking.

As in all anthologies there are some notable exclusions, Francis Thompson, Stephen Vincent Benet, James Elroy Flecker, Edith Sitwell, and one of the finest contemporary poems, Vernon Watkins' "Ballad of Mari Llwyd". The Greeks apparently did not have a word, and they have no place in this volume. The editors, like many others, have erected and been caught on their own *pons asinorum.* Beware of long prefaces.

It should be remembered that the lacquer of literacy may appear thick in a metropolitan society, but in the provinces, in the Celtic and Gaelic territories it is possible for a poet to exist who cannot write, singing or reciting to an audience that cannot read. The oral tradition is older and far more important than the silent printed word. Let us dispose of the idea that sensitive poetry readers are a special kind of artist; they are not, they are just less atrophied by their society. "They who are in earnest do not write but teach".

TOM FOLEY

Literature for an Age of Science, by Hyman Levy and Helen Spalding (Methuen & Co., 15s.).

It is appropriate that the clarification and understanding of the part which literature should play in an evolving scientific age has been presented in collaboration by two authors, one from science and the other from literature.

Man cannot live by bread alone, and the truly "rational" man, in the authors' conception of the term, is the "herd" man. The artist, as much a product of his time as the scientist, influences and moulds "the inward experience of living men". He will move them more emotionally and imaginatively if he fully understands the extent to which they are the children of their age. "Imprecision in awareness cannot possibly be the target of any artist". Literature, forming part of the pattern of the full life, must be conscious of the other elements of activity that go to complete the pattern. The moral responsibility of the poet to interpret and lead is persuasively argued.

The fact that the superb work of art is timeless does not condemn the general level of the thesis.

J.G.

FROM THE GERMAN

German Lyric Poetry, by S. S. Prawer (Routledge, 25s.).

The author of this survey is clearly cultured and well-read, but it is not likely to awaken in students a desire for further exploration. His method of analysis, with its dreary harping on the evocative functions of stresses, alliterations, assonances — the commonplace tools of English and German poetry — is only rarely illuminating, though he is successful with Heine's "Die Weber" and with Rilke.

To some extent Mr. Prawer achieves one of his aims — to demonstrate the close relationship between successive social and political phases in Germany with the poetry they produced, but this *parti pris* has frequently caused him to select poems that prove his thesis rather than the best lyrics of any given period or writer. He seems to have a curiously limited view of lyric poetry in any case: the essence of it he apparently sees in "achieved form" pressed into practical service as a panacea for "turmoil and chaos".

Important observations are relegated to footnotes; many quotations are given without their sources. The book is written, on the whole, in good idiomatic English, though just occasionally it betrays the author's origin; he would do well to avoid using words not to be found in any ordinary dictionary. The excellent short biographies and the bibliography are welcome.

FANNY MOORE

FITZGERALD OR FACTUAL?

Omar Khayyam. A new version based upon recent discoveries, by Arthur J. Arberry (John Murray, 15s.).

It is with a certain reluctance that we approach this book, preferring Omar FitzGerald to Omar Factual. Indeed the first impression heightens the superb, selective craftsmanship of FitzGerald; we care little if there were a number of Omars or one only partially represented. FitzGerald's unified character, along with his uncomplicated philosophy, is good enough. Let us not spoil it.

Curiosity, however, compels comparison and a literal translation of a famous verse reads:

> If hand should give of the pith of wheat a loaf,
> and of wine a two-maunder(jug), of a sheep a thigh,
> with a little sweetheart seated in a desolation,
> a pleasure it is that is not the attainment of any sultan.

The thigh of mutton for a Book of Verse and one remembers Omar was Persian and did not complicate his appetites. He was indeed a very sophisticated person, and Professor Arberry engagingly likens him to A. E. Housman.

This new translation, based on two recently-discovered manuscripts, will interest those who desire to penetrate to the heart of the author, and fascinate the poet as he studies the selective and dramatic compression by FitzGerald. Last but by no means least it stands upon its own poetic content as a verse translation of the undiluted, unabridged and authentic Omar Khayyam.

J.G.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS

THE ORIOLE PRIZE AWARD, 1952

This award was instituted last year by the Oriole Group (the Poets' Group of the Poetry Society). A creative entity, existing within the Society, the Group has a strongly individual life of its own. The members are all active poets, and their chief concern is to meet in an atmosphere of constructive candour and wide-ranging discussion both of their own work and of poetry in general.

Last year it was decided to widen the Group's activities by offering a modest annual prize for open competition, the adjudicator to be an independent authority. The subject for the Oriole Poem is selected by vote at the December meeting each year and announced in the January issue of *The Poetry Review*. In its first year the prize has attracted entries from all over the world and this has been a tremendous encouragement to its originators. The Oriole Group thanks all who submitted work and congratulates those whose poems have gained a chosen place.

The subject for 1952 was "Power". Sir Eugen Millington-Drake was the adjudicator, with two co-opted judges. The first prize was won by Carla Lanyon-Lanyon, Farnham, Surrey, with "an outstanding poem", the second prize by N. E. Buttress, S. Rhodesia — "simple but charming" — and the third divided between Sheila Blanchard, Tuxford, whose poem was "well-thought out, showing much promise", and Eva Nendick, with a four-line poem, "concentrated and effective".

There were fifty-seven entries, plus one received two weeks late which was passed on to *The Poetry Review*. Honorable mention is made to four other contributors — D. C. Marais, Johannesburg, for "a competent poem in the grand manner", Laura Bedell, Ontario, Lilian Gwyther, Cheshire, and Ursula Wilson, Surrey, for "a good poem somewhat marred by a faulty rhyme".

The winning entries are printed in the order accorded them by Sir Eugen Millington-Drake.

"HAD I THE POWER"

CARLA LANYON-LANYON

Had I the power, said one, men should live
At peace under my firm wise government;
Had I power, another said, I'd give
To men of letters all the monies spent
By men for arms. And I would lock the gates
Of a great prison upon the mean of mind,
Crush the cupidity of foreign states
And found a brotherhood for all mankind.

Pilate had power, he condemned to death
A roving Preacher out of Nazareth,
Men's lives were in his hands from hour to hour
And all the might of Rome behind his nod.
So little did God think of mortal power
He gave a mortal power over God.

"MY SMALL SON WATCHES"

N. E. BUTTRESS

My small son watches
His spinning top,
Puts out his hand
And makes the thing stop.

The top is his world,
As it spins in space
His eyes never leave it,
Enchanted his face.

But the moment electric,
Superlative thrill,
Is when he finds out
He can stop it, at will.

POWER

EVA NENDICK

They met in an immortal hour
The real thing and the sham,
When Pilate boasted "I have power"
And Jesus said "I am."

MANIFOLD

SHEILA BLANCHARD

Power from the sun
To earth descending,
All that has life
With life befriending;
But sun's rays trapped
In a burning glass
Can make a desert
That none dare pass.

Power by the earth
To mankind given,
Giant machines
By nature driven;
But a faulty part
Or a weakened wire
Can waste the work
In a blaze of fire.

Power from God
The Spirit burning,
Through all his saints
To God returning,
Love, compassion,
Humility,
Teaching the world
True sanity.

From heart to heart
God's power flowing
All that is good
On men bestowing;
But twisted minds
In the human chain
May make at last
A world insane.

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT, NEW SERIES, No. 14

By TONY VAN DEN BERGH

The latest competition for the Premium Prize has presented the judge with an extremely difficult problem. The subjects and treatment varied so considerably that it was very much like trying to decide between a cameo brooch and a vast, modernistic oil painting. However, the entries were finally narrowed down to five, the eventual choice being Mrs. Pamela Cleaver's "Easter Bathe In Sark". Mrs. Cleaver had presented no complex or soul-searching work of art, but a charming fragment which enabled the reader to share the pleasures and exhilaration of the cold striking water upon the diver.

The other four entries which merit especial comment included Mr. Yorke Crompton's "First Standing Before The Great Pyramid," which contained all the true poetic understanding and feeling which we've come to expect from his pen. The sense of awe when confronted by this monument to a past civilization was completely satisfying.

Mr. Mark Bourne's "Vintage" was delightful. The picture he drew of the vines forcing their way through the hard earth bore the reader back to the delightful villages of South Burgundy and the cheer to be extracted from studying the countryside through the bottom of a wine glass. Especially pleasing were the lines:

> With shadows tremulous and shy —
> Yet shook those belling grapes on high!

EASTER BATHE IN SARK

PAMELA CLEAVER

Cool hills of emerald and aquamarine
Break into flowering snow on the rocks,
Leap high in hosannas, as spangles of spray
Fall bright as silver in scattering flocks.
I grip the red granite, firm and warm to my toes,
Feel my naked skin clothed by the sun's bounteous wealth,
Then leap. On the bright burnished side of the wave
One moment I see my sharp-arrowing self,
Down-piercing the zircon-cold wavering shade.
(Blue — shot with the sun's broken golden bright spear,
Green — shot with the moon's slanting arrows of ice)
Gliding in swift crescent upwards I steer,
Wave-born in glad glory of sun and live sea.
I feel on my skin, pricked warm as blood strives,
Cool blue liquid silk, more soft-clinging smooth
Than richly clothed Solomon's silken wives.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN POETRY AWARD

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to poets in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best poem in English. It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than thirty-two lines. There is no restriction in the choice of subject and poetic form.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. One poem only must be submitted by any one poet, and all entries typewritten. The manuscript must be sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS. can be returned. Closing date for the first year's award is 31st December, 1953.

The outer envelope must be addressed to "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

Mr. Korn is making an equivalent award to The Poetry Society of America. The competition there will be run on similar lines, and any poet writing in English may compete for this Award also, but not with the same poem. The address of this equivalent Award is: The Secretary, The Poetry Society of America, 25 Broadway, New York 4, U.S.A.

LILIAN BOWES LYON POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Lilian (Elizabeth) Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so — and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the first year's award is 30th June, 1953, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Lilian Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (The Poets Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5, this year for a ballad, any subject, any length. Competitors are required to adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and also on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address which must accompany every entry. No Competitor may enter more than one poem.

The winning poem will appear in *Poetry Review*. Do not enclose stamps as manuscripts are not returnable. Closing date 31st July, 1953. Address to: ORIOLE PRIZE, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st June, 1953.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1953

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fifth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10, which is generously offered each year by the Marquess of Queensbury, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1953. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1953

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1953.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION: 1953

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. to reach here not later than 1st March, 1954. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

POET'S PLEASURE

FORWARD FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

Ever advancing! . . . These are hard times for cultural organizations up and down Britain, but whatever set-backs and disappointments The Poetry Society may experience at the established Centres there is a reaching forward continually to unbroken ground. As interesting to report upon as any of the usual activities is the pioneering work that has been done recently in fresh fields and pastures new.

Oxford University, the Central School of Art in London, and Great Yarmouth School of Arts and Crafts, provide examples of our propaganda effort. As one of A. E. Coppard's oldest friends the President was a guest of the English Club of Oxford undergraduates at the seventy-fifth birthday celebration in January of this renowned short-story writer, whose poetry was included in our January-March number. So much interest was shown in the work of The Poetry Society that the establishment of a Centre in the University city cannot be far off. Incidentally, other guests included the Vice-Chancellor, C. Day Lewis, Louis Golding, Richard Hughes (*High Wind in Jamaica*), and Rex Warner.

At the Central School of Art a Poetry Society's Poetry Hour was arranged by Yorke Crompton in conjunction with the Principal, Mr. Johnstone. Unfortunately, Mr. Crompton was prevented by illness from attending, and so was the Society's President. Dr. Leigh Henry, who spoke delightfully, and Charles Doran, sharing the Reading with Miss Kelty Macleod at very short notice, inspired the large gathering of young men and women with an enthusiasm that could not fail to incline their hearts in the way we would have them go.

Mr. Yorke Crompton returned from a visit to the East Coast in great heart after meeting Mr. William Corrie, Principal of Great Yarmouth School of Arts and Crafts, and hearing from him and his colleague, Mr. Ru. Van Rossem, that they wished to form a Centre of The Poetry Society in their neighbourhood. The School has 500 students, and Mr. Corrie, who assured us that there had been a good gathering to hear Mr. Alun Llewellyn in the autumn, has written to say "We are optimistic". Mr. Van Rossem, who is the Director of Graphic Arts at the School, has broadcast in the B.B.C. programme, "Chroniques des Lettres et des Arts" and on one of his visits to London was also invited to take part in "In Town To-night". Recently he held an exhibition of his work in London.

At the time of our going to press Sir Eugen Millington-Drake is abroad, lecturing in the Union of South Africa. He has taken with him the President's goodwill greeting on behalf of The Poetry Society, and, given as a prelude to some translations of poems by members, it is received with enthusiasm. Prior to his South African tour, Sir Eugen visited the Societé des Poetes Francais, Paris, and gave an address following a lecture on French Women-Poets by Madame la Duchesse de la Rouchefauld.

LEICESTER

Back home, let us first give a salute not to a Centre already in existence but, to use a football term, a Centre forward. At Leicester the intention of A. G. Richards and a group of devoted friends of poetry is to promote a branch in the near future and, moreover, to get into a steady stride by the early autumn so that they will then be strong

enough to join with other cultural societies in a very ambitious promotion — an Eisteddfod in its English equivalent!

Look out, says Mr. Richards, for information about the new Centre in the local papers, and particulars of the proposed lectures through local cultural bodies. It is probable that these will be arranged for the late afternoon so that people who have other activities either on Saturday afternoon or evening will be able, "with a slight effort", to attend. Mr. Richards' address for enquiries is 45 Swainson Road, Leicester.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

Always at this Centre an evening of members' verse, read by the authors if possible, is a popular occasion. The January meeting was devoted to the work of Cecil Wilson, Kenneth Lillington, Mrs. Bridger, Irene Round, John Gittens, G. D. Lucas and Gilbert Matthers, all of it showing "sensitive and competent ability". Discussion followed, and the President, Mr. Wilfred Gibson, one of the "Georgians" when Sir Edward Marsh was publishing his anthologies, would have been impressed by the general spirit.

A shadow has fallen on the Centre through the death of Mr. Gittens, and The Poetry Society wishes to offer Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens its deep sympathy. Mrs. Gittens is the Hon. Secretary, and enquiries from poetry-lovers are welcomed at 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

GUILDFORD

From time to time Miss Roberta Shuttleworth organizes a programme of verse-readings similar to that of Walton and Weybridge, and a recent programme by contrast was one of talk and reading given by Miss Lesley Deane, actress-member of The Poetry Society, and teacher and producer at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Miss Deane's title was "Persistent Hope", and very beautifully she read from (among others) Milton and Omar Khayyam, Keats and Wordsworth, W. H. Davies and Alun Llewellyn, whose work is well known especially in *Punch*. She gave, too, some passages from the late T. W. Ramsey's version of Dante's "Divine Comedy".

A member of the audience, Miss Odette Tchernine, writes: "Lesley Deane has a quiet but very real depth of interpretation. She conveys the poet's mood, the light and shade of his words, and she never overplays her charm of personality."

IPSWICH

More than half a year has passed since this Centre came into being. It has already had some distinguished speakers at its monthly meeting, and now Sir Francis Meynell, poet-son of a gifted family of poets and littérateurs has brought enchantment to us. In February he gave a most illuminating address on his famous mother, Alice Meynell, her personality and her poetry. The meetings are held at The Great White Horse Hotel, and the address of the Hon. Secretary, Miss Kay M. Turner, is 18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

This Centre has lost one of its most valued members. Mr. H. E. Langston died suddenly, after a lengthy and most loyal service in poetry. Not only did he bring to the Centre a deep enthusiasm, but he devoted his time most generously to the work of our very successful organization. He never missed one of the meetings, however scattered they may be over the county, and the members will not easily forget how admirably Mr. Langston arranged the yearly visit to Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Hon. Secretaries are Mrs. Van den Bergh, Little Basing, Bray, Berks, and Mrs. Day, Westwood, Windsor Road, Maidenhead.

EALING

After an anxious period of ups-and-downs the Ealing Centre has been reorganized. Through the generosity of Mrs. Booker, mother of an esteemed member, a private room at Greystokes, Queen's Parade, North Ealing, is set out for meetings each first Tuesday of the month, 7.30 to 9.30. Enquiries about the Centre should be sent to that address, c/o Miss Janice Booker.

In membership the Centre is back to its old numbers. A duplicated reminder sent to each member during the week before a meeting, a warm welcome, and refreshments — these have helped most effectively. John Bayliss, Vernon Scannell and William McDermott have had evenings devoted to their writings: incidentally Mr. Scannell's first novel, "The Fight" will be published early this year: so will Mr. McDermott's book of verse, "The Constant Fever".

The annual Verse-writing Competition was judged by Kennedy Williamson, of the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*, assisted by Mr. Scannell and Mr. McDermott. Little Miss Giles, aged 12, followed by Patricia Standingford and Diana Millen won the three prizes in the age-groups 12 to 16, and M. R. Monk won the open-group prize, with Fairlie Adam next and G. Richards, Janice Booker, and T. Hendriks sharing third place. For the winning poems see the Spring issue of *The Voice of Youth*.

Several of Kennedy Williamson's comments at the judging are of such general interest that they have been transferred to page 329 of this issue. Both the Verse-speaking and Verse-writing annual Competitions organized by the Centre will be held again. A Verse-drama group, not restricted to members, is being formed, and at the annual meeting of the Centre Mr. W. McDermott was elected its President.

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

And now, away across the Seven Seas goes our salute to a great city under the Southern Cross — Sydney, New South Wales. It may be that by the time these words are published two new Centres are inaugurated, one in the city itself and another in a suburb. About the city Centre an enthusiast who is ready to start work writes: "Your Ealing and Hampstead branches strengthen the Society, they don't weaken it. So with your permission I want to strengthen it here: I can form a very healthy Sydney Centre." Will Sydney readers please watch for news in the newspapers over there?

ST. PETERSBURG (FLORIDA, U.S.A.):—Members meet from November to May in small groups on Wednesdays to further the love and recognition of the "spirit and substance of Poetry". This year we pay tribute, also, to the winning work of our Mary O'Connor in the establishment of National Poetry Day, proclaimed by the Governors of forty-three of the American States. On November 19th, there was a successful programme of ten Portrait Poems — subjects unnamed — written on the basis of biographical and achievement records, previously provided. Only the Shakespearean Sonnet form was allowed. Details of the Centre activities from President Helen Robinson, 815 Jackson Street, N., St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

TORONTO (CANADA)

Our first year of association with The Poetry Society has come to a close. It may not have done much for either the Centre here or for the Society in London, but we are, after all, 3,000 miles away.

There have been thirty entries for our Annual Poetry Contest, which, under the auspices of the Pen Guild of Toronto, was inaugurated fifteen years ago. The winning poems are of high quality. In various ways poetry over here, especially in America, has been making strides, and many members have won prizes of one sort or another, and gained prominence in magazines and periodicals with their work. The year 1953 was given a very happy send-off by Professor Adrian Macdonald, who lectured at headquarters in January on William Wordsworth. Incidentally, a visitor at the Christmas meeting was heard to say: "I never knew there was such a happy, uninhibited group in staid old Toronto!" Enquiries are welcomed by Mr. Thomas G. Ballantyne, Apartment 2, 101 Bernard Avenue, Toronto, Canada.

PORTMAN SQUARE — HOME AND AWAY

By the Editorial Staff

Saturday at Portman Square. Let no one think only of our Friday Readings when the activities of The Poetry Society are being considered. It is true that the Poetry Hour from 6.30 to 7.30 bulks largely in the mind as Everyman's five-day week comes to a close — sanctuary after the hurly-burly of getting and spending; but for some enthusiasts it is just a prelude to such other fixtures as, for instance, Dr. Leigh Henry's delightfully exciting Saturday afternoons, when young people assemble eagerly to hear his talks and readings, unique every one of them. "Travel Films in Poetry", "Marvels of To-day in Poetry", "Poetry Comic Strips", and "History Cavalcade" — these were the subjects to

HENRY MORTON ROBINSON

the author of that fine novel, *The Cardinal*, has written a volume of poems in which the verse is grafted on traditional stock and so can portray modern ideas without obscurity or distortion. At his best he has the narrative vigour of the best of Masefield. "He glorifies sincere romantic sentiment." — *Liverpool Daily Post.* 10s. 6d.

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which this distinguished poet and musician gave rich illumination during the dark early months of the year.

Not only Dr. Leigh Henry enlivens the spacious book-lined rooms at "33" on Saturdays. Many of the examinations in Verse Speaking, organized by the Poetry Society, are held there, and young aspirants of all ages attend in great numbers, shepherded by parents and teachers; and here again, as when Dr. Leigh Henry speaks, the Society is helping the next generation to learn how to live helpfully and finely. Quietly and modestly, moreover, and in gay earnest. The atmosphere that inspires everyone who is associated in any way with these Auditions, whether at home or away in schools and centres, gave warmth and colour to the annual Teachers Conference held in the Portman Square library at the beginning of January. The President, Mr. Thomas Moult, charmingly introduced to the large gathering by Mr. John Graddon, Hon. Treasurer, was deeply impressed by the devotion to poetry of these good people who may rightly be described as encouragers as well as examiners.

The Misses Ann Clark, Mary Cole, Jean Hamilton, Mollie Hudson, Marjorie Lyon, Dorothy Robinson, Marjorie Sherborne, and Roberta Shuttleworth, The Poetry Society's Examiners, asked and answered questions and joined in the debates. "There was much interesting and constructive discussion," reports Miss Lyon, "particularly on the choice and standard of tests. It is my earnest hope that the varying standards of difficulty within each grade are made plain. We did consider this carefully when compiling the syllabus and came to the conclusion that a grade — i.e., Senior Bronze — might be taken by a very young fifteen-year-old or an extremely advanced seventeen; consequently the poems should be selective both in content and actual technical difficulty. Equally there may be a highly spiritually advanced ten-year-old who needs a poem which most people would consider too old for that age-group. Of course it might be argued that the examinee's own choice could be chosen in such a case; but then the child would have two ill-balanced poems to deal with and so miss the fundamental training in programme building."

As an instance of the good work in this sphere that goes on outside Portman Square, Miss Lyon writes about a "heart-warming" visit — or, rather, a re-visit — to Orleans County Secondary Mixed School at St. Margarets-on-Thames. There were no fewer than seventy candidates. "As a teacher myself I know the difficulties of teaching verse to large classes. So often it is just mass production which leads nowhere, but here was genuine verse-speaking. Boys and girls alike obviously love poetry — and, what is more, have been led (I use the words advisedly) to understand it. They are very lucky to have the chance of working with Mr. Burgess, a teacher of real gifts, and lucky too in that their headmaster encourages wholeheartedly their study of the spoken word."

And now for the Friday Evenings at Portman Square . . .

"He lifted us out of our chairs!" Such was the opinion of a member of the audience at the close of a dramatic reading of Oscar Wilde's "Florentine Tragedy" by Mr. Charles Doran and his colleagues in February — Mr. Charles Mason's production — when the attendance was one of the winter's largest. The New Year season had begun with the quarterly "review" of the current *Poetry Review*, when the Editorial Board faced their critics. A surprise-innovation during the proceedings (as lively and forthright as usual) was the appearance of two contributors, Mr. Louis Golding and Rev. F. Pratt Green, who read aloud their essays with great success. Readers who attend these *Review* evenings may like to have a quarterly guess in advance as to the contributors who dare to face the representatives of some thousands of readers!

Miss Kelty MacLeod, lovely-voiced, lofty-spirited, and Mr. James McKechnie, splendid always, made just as memorable the evening devoted by Mrs. Kathleen V. Richardson to the work of Robert Burns. Miss MacLeod has made her valuable contribution to the success of several evenings since the winter began, and we are happy to be able to promise that she and Mr. McKechnie will both be featured in our special Coronation series beginning in May.

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Another favourite, Miss Irene Brent, appeared with much success in March, when she and the Misses Elizabeth Brough and Fiona Nicholson took part in "Shakespeare Scenes and Speeches". Miss Mary Ainsworth and Mr. Robert Mooney were Mr. John Carroll's guest-readers "From the Chinese" earlier on — they brought enchantment — and another programme of Poems of the East — "Magic Carpet" arranged by Mr. Yorke Crompton — followed in mid-March, introducing a truly Oriental flavour with readers from many Asiatic countries. This was an especially unique evening.

Breezily enthusiastic as ever, Mr. Tom Foley was responsible for two programmes, to which Miss Mollie Hudson and Miss Josephine Turner contributed. Mr. Tony van den Bergh revived interest — with a bang — in the work of that rousing old storyteller in verse about the Klondyke and kindred places, Robert W. Service. And what may be called the Spring season was announced to conclude with Dr. Leigh Henry's Wessex Festival Production of Milton's "Comus", with music and voices. Another of the Readings was well-contrasted. Arranged by the President, with Mr. Stephen Graham a benign chairman, the programme brought into full view of the audience ("And did you once see Shelley plain?") such representative member-poets as Robert Armstrong, Yorke Crompton, Leigh Henry, Alun Llewellyn, Fanny Moore, Kathleen Richardson, and Paul Selver. Geoffrey Johnson's contributions were read in his absence by Mr. Doran.

"What's past is Prologue" . . . Prologue to another dozen readings between May and July, which everybody at our headquarters is working hard to make worthy of the royal occasion to which they are dedicated

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

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Here is a list of Programmes for late April, May, and early June, Friday evenings, 6.30 to 7.30, at 33 Portman Square. Members 1s., Non-Members 2s. "Everybody Welcome."

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	24	Scenes from Elizabethan Plays.	(arranged by Charles Doran)
May	1	Review of the current *Poetry Review*. Readers' opinions invited by the Editorial Board.	

CORONATION SERIES — THE BRITISH ISLES AND THE COMMONWEALTH

May	8	Wales — Her Contribution to British Poetry. Illustrated by readings — historical and modern — Bardic harp airs and mystical interludes.	(presented by Dr. Leigh Henry)
	15	Scotland. Readers: James McKechnie and Kelty MacLeod.	(K. V. Richardson)
	22	Ireland — The Many-Coloured Land.	(T. H. Foley)
	29	Canada.	
June	5	Our Poet Kings and Queens.	(Charles Doran)

NOTE.—The Coronation Series of Readings will be continued until 24th July. For the remaining Programmes see our July–September number.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minumum fee of 5s.

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BURGESS HILL:—Meetings second Saturday in each month at Mrs. Lambert's restaurant, 45 Church Road. All enquiries to Miss K. G. Boycott, "Twemlow", Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (Affiliated to The Poetry Society):—Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A.

DUMFRIES:—Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.):—*President General:* Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, PA., U.S.A.

HAMPSTEAD:—Meetings on first and third Fridays, 8–9.30 p.m., at 14 Eldon Grove, by invitation of Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL AND DISTRICT:—Major E. H. F. Morris, Belclare, Old Town, Bexhill-on-Sea.

KENSINGTON:—Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

NORTHERN IRELAND:—Enquiries should be sent to Miss H. Haddock, 18 Ashley Gardens, Belfast.

MANCHESTER:—Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester 13. Meetings at Milton Hall, Deansgate, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries should be sent to Mrs. W. M. Riley, 20 Medina Drive, Tollerton, Nottingham.

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA):—Enquiries to Mrs. Borden Haverstock, 12 Ogilvie Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

REIGATE:—Meetings monthly at The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate. Enquiries to Mrs. M. A. Hicks.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.):—*President:* Helen T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

SHEFFIELD:—Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

STROUD:—Hon. Secretary, Miss Mary Martyn, Sunfold, Rodborough Common, near Stroud.

TORONTO (CANADA):—All enquiries to Mr. Thos. G. Ballantyne of Apartment 2, 101 Bernard Avenue, Toronto. Telephone: M.I. 2976.

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Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

ORIOLE POETS GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey — Leigh Henry.

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TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A stamped and self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least a month has elapsed. A decision may take longer.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

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These pages—An Offering to
SIEGFRIED SASSOON
"Everyone suddenly burst out singing . . .
And beauty came like the setting sun"

Prelude . . .

LOOKING BACK—AND FORWARD

A year has now passed since the care of *The Poetry Review* was entrusted to the Editorial Board of The Poetry Society. It has been a year of struggle and (modestly triumphant) survival. The outside threat to the highest standards in art and morals has continued and inevitably our work is affected, if only economically. But the Board, a voluntary set-up, is now able to look back on four numbers, and whatever faults may have been observed in them, their production has been carried through in a spirit of gay enterprise, always hopeful and enthusiastic, always faithful — we trust — to the standards which poets and the friends of poetry have sought to maintain for many generations.

* * *

In the prose contributions as well as those by poets new and established, we have never consciously allowed our ideals to be lowered or cheapened. Only the best is good enough for *Review* readers. Such has been our motto, and by no means the least valuable feature in which we have tried to live up to it has, so far, been one of prose — that of an earnest and prolonged controversy, best described in a two-fold phrase: Right *versus* Left and Left *versus* Right.

The controversy is not yet ended, nor is it likely to be while readers are eager to take part, as they are doing in the following pages. We may expect more fun and argument in the year ahead of us, always remembering that the proper rejoinder in any debate is the Retort Courteous. A happy example of the shape this might take was given during the Presidential address to the Annual Meeting of the Society in May.

It has to do with cricket, so it is seasonable — and a Test match in particular. On such an occasion the normal accommodation is not enough for the crowd of newspaper commentators who attend the day's play: consequently they overflow into the high-priced places usually reserved for members and other spectators.

At a certain game in the provinces between England and Australia, one of the newspaper men was a famous cricketer turned journalist.

He found himself obliged to tap out each of his quarter-hourly reports — he was writing for a London evening paper — on his typewriter just behind a lady who did not seem to like the arrangement. Soon she lost patience and turned with a frown, saying: "How long shall we have to listen to your typewriter, may I ask?" "All day, Madam, I am afraid," was the reply. "Then I shall send a complaint to the committee," snapped the lady.

Promptly came the Retort Courteous. "Very well, Madam. May I type it for you?"

* * *

The Coronation is over. Her Majesty the Queen is enthroned, and now that the tumult and shouting have died a very happy memory remains for half the world, nor will it fade. The joyful occasion has had an uncommon significance in poetry, apart from the "pomp and feast and revelry . . . and antique pageantry" that Milton wrote about and Shakespeare delighted in. Poets of our time, youthful and old alike, have one thing to cherish above all the rest, for Walter de la Mare, the well-beloved, was honoured by Queen Elizabeth with the Order of Merit.

Not only poets will have taken pleasure in this royal recognition of a rare spirit, sweet and quiet. Even young boys and girls at school, as well as newly grown-ups and greybeards who seldom read any poetry, would be touched by the announcement, especially because it emphasizes the resemblance in their queenly preferences between the two Elizabeths, both of whom have bestowed their favour on England's greatest heritage in the arts. It need hardly be added here that Lilian Bowes-Lyon, a woman-poet of distinction, was a cousin of the Queen Mother.

Mr. de la Mare, who is an enthusiastic reader of *The Poetry Review* — he has promised us a new poem — has not had the good health that we would wish for him. "I've been in bed for some little time, and work scrubbles along with the brakes on." So he wrote from his home in Horace Walpole's Twickenham just prior to a stay for convalescence by the sea. "However," he added, "it does scrubble along. Will you be desperately shocked when I tell you that another selection of this Ancient's workmanship may be out some time in the autumn?"

* * *

By acclamation The Poetry Society elected at the Annual Meeting a new honorary member in Robert-Edward Hart, poet of Mauritius, who has achieved a distinguished reputation in three continents, and as earnestly as any man of letters abroad has revealed to his countrymen the work of English poets. In recognition of this service the British Government has awarded him the O.B.E.

Robert-Edward Hart de Keatinge — to give him his full name that he never uses — is a British citizen by birth. "If his work is little known in this country," writes Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, "it is not surprising,

because he writes exclusively in French." He is regarded in France as a "douce honneur de la langue Francaise," and has been awarded the Legion of Honour.

In India the poetry of Robert-Edward Hart is widely read for its mystical symbolism, and studied in American universities for its philosophy as well as its art. How remarkable it is that no British academy has yet thought fit to offer him any sort of laurel whatever! The Poetry Society has pride in paying its tribute. An essay on his work will appear in our next number.

* * *

Two more poets of distinction have gone from us. It is with regret that we report the death of Wrenne Jarman, whose writing is well known to our readers; and also of Edward Shanks, one of the "Georgians", and winner of the once-famous Hawthornden Prize. How vividly it is recalled that in his early days Edward Shanks was hailed by the critics popularly known as "The Squirearchy" as a great discovery. It has been a loss to poetry that he gradually became engulfed by bread-and-butter journalism.

Miss Jarman was a member of The Poetry Society, and when her poems were printed in *The Poetry Review* she graciously returned the cheques that were sent to her. In this issue we print a sonnet-sequence that was received in manuscript by the Editorial Board almost simultaneously with the news of her death in a London hospital, so that the sonnets must have been her last work.

* * *

We also print in the following pages a group of poems by Kersti Bergroth, the renowned Finnish novelist, critic, dramatist, and poet. In translating the poetry she has had the guidance of a distinguished English author, who writes: "Her plays are performed in the National Theatre of Finland, and her writings are famous in Sweden as well. I have met her at P.E.N. Congress . . . I find her poems curiously moving, with their Chinese undertones."

* * *

Postscripts.—Her Majesty the Queen has graciously accepted a copy of the April-June number of *The Poetry Review* containing William Kean Seymour's "Sonnet on the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II." . . . Odette Tchernine's Coronation talk-interview for U.S.A. was broadcast over a wide network in early June . . . Archibald MacLeish is the winner of the famous Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his *Collected Poems 1917-1951*. Mr. MacLeish won the same award for *Conquistador* in 1933 . . . John Bayliss, of the Editorial Board, has accepted an official post in North Africa, and his place has been taken by Kathleen Richardson, a well-known contributor to *Punch*.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

ANIMA

To Gwyneth

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

O you who haunt me night and day,
  By valley, plain, and hill,
  Unheard, invisible;
Not near, and yet not far away;
  Past thought: close-hid behind
  The curtains of my mind —

I pass you in the city's throng,
  — The perfume of your hair —
  Turn: and you are not there;
In the loud street, a waft of song —
  I pause: but that sweet voice
  Dies in the street's loud noise.

Was it of you, last night, I dreamed?
  Memory plunges deep
  In the thick seas of sleep,
But from that death brings back redeemed
  Less than an image, lost
  Sooner than seen almost.

Gentle as coming night are you,
  When up the silent sky
  The dusk steals silently;
Ardent and cold as morning dew,
  When day with his first light
  Kisses the tears of night.

Remote as farthest star from earth,
  Yet close as earth to stone;
  Life-fast, yet each alone;
Both bear the sightless brand of birth;
  Sundered as pole from pole,
  Yet, in my soul, my Soul.

O dear-beloved, and long-desired,
  Come in the shadowed hours
  When life withdraws her powers;
Touch my closed lids, my brow thought-tired,
  And on my silent lips
  Lay your hushed finger-tips:

That I may know you at my side,
— Not left to my rough fate
Witless and desolate!
Be comforter, grace, hope, and guide,
Till time makes one again
The one that time made twain.

SANG OF APPLEBY

(for music)

DOROTHY UNA RATCLIFFE

Luve, wilta coom by t'High Wynd an' I'll come by t'Low?
At t'edge o' dark, I'll meet thee an' armin' we will go
Alang by bonnie Eden, past brig to t'reet o' way,
Fra' Appleby, fra' Appleby i' t'merry month o' May.

Dosta mind them flooerin' hawthorns? Willy-wagtails on ahead?
How watters wimpled crystal-clear ower steeäns i' t'river-bed?
My Luve, Aa! my dear Luve, it's mony years ago
Sin' thoo came doon by t'High Wynd an' I came up by t'Low.

Note:— In each instance "t" is scarcely sounded.

MUSINGS OF A PEDIGREE CAT

PAUL SELVER

When *they* have visitors, *I* dominate
The scene, arousing gushful joy and awe.
Queen-like (I *am* one), drooping a silvery paw
(Smart cats are slightly languid), I rest in state.

In spells of babyish prattle all admire
My lush Angora tail, my sleek furs thrill,
My melting ambery eyes, wherein, at will,
I can switch on a smouldering loop of fire.

Yet though displaying demure and effortless pride,
Beneath this well-bred mask I bravely hide
A boredom deeper even than Baudelaire's.

These empty pomps I loathe (as Horace said).
But O, for gobbets of rich, raw meat, as red
As blood, and as juicy as one of Puccini's airs.

DARK HORIZON

WRENNE JARMAN

I

He lies, an old man with his pale hands crossed
  Upon his patient breast that knew no guile,
  While we who nevermore will see him smile
Stand silent for the fondness we have lost.
Would he have wished the scene this summer's day —
  The dismal black, the blooms piled on his bier,
  The ready spade, the turves, the furtive tear,
The muffled bell that tolls his term away?

Invisibly his cold hands hold the key
  To all the splendours past the shadowy doors:
  He sees the crowns, massed candles, golden
    floors.
The lightened dawn of ultimate Mystery, —
  And marvels greatly at our senseless grief
  For one more emigrant escaped to life.

II

Of all the favours in the lap of Earth,
  Thou, Death, most rare! The airs of youth blow
    sweet
  And Love's short battle's worth a long defeat,
And tasks conceived and hardly brought to birth
Earn rapture for an hour — but rapture goes
  The way of heroes and frail lovely queens,
  Of great occasions, immemorial scenes,
All trimmed to the brief radiance of the rose.

How good, before the slow consuming lie,
  The cancer of the tottering citadel,
To be at one with all we ripened by, —
  The dewy misted fields, the shining well,
    The phantom shape of mountains seen afar,
    The glimmer on this small world of a star.

III

Beyond the dark horizon, cloudy-curved,
  They have gone sailing — my belov'd, my friends,
    Making their way with courage towards ends
Contained in their beginnings, yet deserved.

Singly they went, the lauded and unsung,
The good and bad, prepared and unprepared,
Those who were old and ripe and still hard-spared,
And — sharpest *au revoir* — the fair and young.

I feared that final voyage on the dread
Outgoing tide, but I am lonely now,
I too would trim some falcon figurehead,
Pile for my needy soul rich meats in the prow:
Like some Magellan tense for sight of land,
Would seek that shore my flag has ever spanned.

IV

Birthdays we circle red and celebrate:
Deathdays lie fastened with unbroken seal —
Dark warrants waiting acid to reveal
Dates penned in the invisible ink of Fate.
Comes ours in March, in August or December?
Is it near at.hand, O could it be *to-day*?
The day all journeys end on, whence the way
Winds downward, is a dolmen to remember.

No chaste memorial card, no flower or candle
Could ease that hidden holyday slipped by,
Nor raise one tone the mute *Memento mori!*
Love could not bear it — and it would give scandal
In Heaven, to mourn too soon the month we die,
What season we pass from glory into Glory.

THE UNITY OF MAN

YORKE CROMPTON

God made the planets from the central Sun
That lives within his being, and to each
Gave his own nature, with the force to reach
Back from the sphere of many to the One.
And as he watched his children where they spun
The woof of time on space, his silent speech
Uttered the notion Man, that it might teach
By a frail image what his work had done.
As the planets, branching through their ways,
Render his influence in a power renewed,
Each yielding up the harvest of its task,
So all the human tribes, rooted, must raise
From their one stem of nature, thus endued,
The tithings of himself that he may ask.

CACTI

MADGE HALES

How aridly you lived;
Swollen yet sterile through the years,
With gaunt limbs pricked in swords
That held your stubborn fears.

Wind could not move you,
Nor rain refresh your harsh tongue;
You hurt the eye like stone,
You were the ancient wrong.

Then what hidden sun provoked you
To this paradox of health,
This audacious pink-bell beauty,
By what millennium of stealth?

BOUNTY

ALICE M. GIDMAN

If there were fewer stars
I should look up more often;
There would be lit in me
A greater marvel and humility,
And I might feel
A wonder that the lighter of the lamps,
When calling up the night to rest the day,
Remembered even this —
That men might fear the dark.

If beauty were more rare
It might obsess me more,
And ugliness
Might not so seem to dominate my mind.
If the green lawns were not so green
And daffodils more grey than gold,
I might discount the thousand hours
It took to find
The lovely things that now are at my hand.

Because my eyes have sight
Unfocussed to perfection,
If there were less to see
I might see more.

THE AWAKENING

By LORD DUNSANY

A week-end in the country with friends, grass all round him on sandy land where harebells were swinging while the late summer glowed — this was a wonderful change for Alfred Binnet from the hard pavements of London and the work and the crowd and the noise. And yet he was uneasy, for, to sum up the whole situation, he felt that he was a lowbrow, while these friends of his, whatever they were, understood things which to him were completely mysterious. For instance the lines;

Infinity is not infinitude,
So far as I am able to make out,
In a manner of speaking,

meant nothing to him at all, whereas to them, as well as to thousands of others, they were deep and rich with great poetry.

Those lines had already been so widely accepted, with the whole work of Pornick who wrote them, that it was no use for Alfred Binnet to say that they were not great poetry, and he could only inwardly bewail his own inability to be stirred and exalted by them. He had brought with him on his little visit a book of poetry that he could understand, something that he regarded as a primer, hoping that a careful study of that would lead him to higher things and perhaps to a proper appreciation of Pornick.

The book was the Odes of Keats, and as soon as he was left alone in the smoking-room he pulled it out of his pocket and began to read, and was delighted to find that at least he could be stirred by the beauty of it. But it was a delight that was very short-lived, for his host came back to the smoking-room, and, seeing what he was reading, at once said: "No, no, no. Really not that. No, no, my dear fellow. Quite outmoded."

And Binnet slipped the offending book hastily into his pocket.

"No, no," said his host. "It is Pornick who is being read now, and several young fellows inspired by him who are coming on very nicely. But Keats, no, no. Out-of-date as Shakespeare. No, no, Keats won't do."

So mournful an expression came over Binnet's face that his host said: "Never mind, you'll get to like Pornick."

And Binnet could only shake his head mournfully.

"Yes, you will," his host went on. "And luckily you will have an opportunity that may be a great help to you. One of his greatest works, 'Mud On The Mantelpiece', has been set to music, and the musician who did it is coming down here to-morrow to play it over. He is going to play in the drawing-room, and I think that will help you to see the melody there is in Pornick and may light up, as it were, his deeper profundities, so that you will be able to see them. We have a few friends coming to hear him. I think you will like it."

But Alfred Binnet did not like it, although he did not say so. He knew

too well that everybody invited would be someone well able to understand depths which he had never plumbed.

When dinner-time came that day it was an uneasy meal, the uneasiness that cramped the conversation of Binnet being the natural uneasiness that he felt in the presence of this too-intellectual host and hostess, multiplied by the number of intellectuals he feared to meet to-morrow. And they, who should have been dissipating that uneasiness, as any host and hostess should, could not easily do so, because of an uneasiness of their own, one that they tried to confine to themselves without troubling their guest. It was a very simple matter for them to make a mystery about, but what was worrying them, what they were taking so much trouble to keep to themselves, was an oppressive doubt as to whether their piano was worthy of the musician they had invited, whether it was in good enough tune, a thing they should have seen to long ago, but had put off until too late, as it seemed it must be now, for Sunday was coming.

In the drawing-room after dinner some cheerier conversation started, but it was being constantly interrupted by the departure of the host from the room in order to telephone something about the piano; and, whatever news he got from the telephone, it did not seem to Binnet to have been anything very satisfactory. So they went on worrying about their piano, and, so far as Binnet could tell, nothing seemed to have been decided.

Next morning an air of uncertainty that had seemed to hang over the house appeared to have lifted a little; his host and hostess were a little more cheerful now. Not so Binnet, for with every hour the time drew nearer when there would come into the house a large number of people, every one of them on an intellectual plane from which the profundities of modern verse were clearly visible, profundities into which poor Alfred Binnet could see no further than the ordinary eye can see down into mud. Lunch came with a more hopeful expression brightening on the faces of host and hostess, while gloom was settling on Binnet. In the early afternoon, earlier than he had expected it, the purr was heard of the first motor arriving, and Binnet, with the first excuse that he could invent, retired from the drawing-room into the smoking-room, which was next door. He believed the car to be bringing the first guest, but after a while, from where he sat he suddenly heard the notes of a piano.

And now, unembarrassed by the presence of men and women to whom, without anything to be said by them, he knew he was but a lowbrow, he hoped that by giving his whole mind to it he might quietly learn something of the beauties of Pornick.

He listened intently. One long reiterated note uttered its mournful sound, and the piece was begun. Whether the audience had arrived on foot and gone quietly into the drawing-room he did not know, but with all his energies concentrated on the music he did not hear any sound of them; and out of that music he tried to draw the message of Pornick.

Pong, pong, pong, went that opening note, and then pook, pook, from a higher one, and then the pong, pong again, lifting its mournful voice. Monotony there was in it certainly, and little melody, and yet from the sad notes he gradually drew a message that was the reward of his intensity.

He felt that after all Pornick had something to say. His hostess had shown him the opening lines of the poem that the musician had set to music: they went like this:

> Void, void, void.
> My mind in it and my heart in it.
> And the void flowering
> With the voice of thus.

Under the influence of that mournful music he began to see a meaning, and as a third note added its monotonous call he began to perceive a message. Another note was struck and then another, till Binnet felt sure at last that Pornick had something to say to him, something he would soon understand, some message that he might yet make his own, so that he could go among those people who were invited that afternoon, not quite the miserable mouse at a cat-show that he had felt himself before.

Yes, at last under the influence of that music a meaning appeared and, even though unmelodious, blossomed and grew more clear. Pong, pong, pong, the sad note called out its message, till the moment of Binnet's awakening came, and he felt he so far understood Pornick that now he could dare to mix with a band of devotees.

Stirred by his new hope he rose on the instant and entered the drawing-room. To his astonishment there was no audience there except him alone. The man at the piano glanced round at him, but continued tapping his monotonous note. Something in the man's air as he glanced at him, something perhaps in his mournful aloof music, made him see that he was not expected in that room, nor expected to stay.

Then he heard a voice through the door, that came from the dining-room. So the musician, thought Binnet, must be left alone in the melancholy atmosphere that his reiterated note was building sadly around him. There was much that he did not yet understand in modern poetry, and this must be one of the strange conditions under which it was set to music.

He went on without a word and into the dining-room, treading on tiptoe. There were his host and hostess, and not a guest but himself.

"I am very sorry I interrupted . . ." began Binnet.

"That's all right," said his hostess. "We are sitting in here till he's finished. James was very lucky to get him last night on the 'phone. He kindly came to help us, although it is Sunday."

"But, but," said Binnet, "I understood you invited him long ago."

"O, the musician," his hostess said. "He won't be here for another half hour. That's the piano-tuner."

PRAYER THAT A CHILD MAY NOT DIE

(From the French of Francis Jammes)

MARJORIE BALDWIN

O God, keep for them this tiny little child,
Just as you keep safe a blade of grass in the wind.
What would it mean to you, because his mother is crying,
Not to let him die there very soon,
As though it were something which no one could help?
If you let him live, he will be running next year
To scatter roses at Corpus Christi.
But you are too good. It is not you, O God,
Who paints pallid death on rosy cheeks,
Unless it is when you have no place
By open windows for little boys
To be happy by the side of their mothers.
But why not here? O, because the hour is sounding,
Remember, O God, before this dying child,
That you live all the time close to your Mother.

THIS GENERATION

STARR POWERS

Do not judge this generation
For violently a wind rose
In their springtime,
Tearing the young and growing leaves
Apart from tender roots,
To fall on hardened ground,
No mercy found.

Do not judge this generation
For suddenly a wind rose
In their springtime
And tossed them in confusion . . .
They settled in a heap,
And no one thought to weep.

Being pitted one against the other
Bruised them,

Being hurled together
Hurt them,
Being heaped upon each other
Crushed them,
They fell on hardened ground
They settled in a heap
And no one thought to weep,
No mercy found.

Young and tender then,
They shall never forget.
Now out of the rubble
The Moment must find
Those to send forth, and those to leave behind,
And find those still clinging by the thread,
And sort the living from the dead.

All is well, All is well,
They are not yet half a century old
But well prepared for the next high winds . . .
Some were tossed that windy day
To unheard-of places along the way
Unnoticed they grow,
Grow sturdy and so
Blow, high winds, blow,
And judge this generation!

CHANGE OF TOOLS

ELSIE M. BANISTER

Now must I change my tools, discard awhile
My palette, paints and brushes, wield a pen,
Link word to word for eyes and ears of men,
Link heart to heart despite the measured mile;
My canvases, confined to frame and wall
For viewers in their own vicinity,
Can bring no comfort or delight from me
To lonely ones whose tears in secret fall.
Neglect of Art? Maybe, yet who can gauge
The worth of pictures or the artist's fame,
The chance of Fortune's gifts in any age,
The times critique, the dealer's subtle game?
To what avail, if someone turns a page
And seeks, and finds, a poem that bears my name?

FOUR POEMS

KERSTI BERGROTH

HEAVENLY LETTER

To whom shall I write a letter?
All friends have become enemies
Because life is such, that hostilities grow in all hearts
And ripen with age, strangely.
We all feel with the years
That we hate all others.

Why must I oppose you
My friend and brother?
Why does it anger me that you speak?
That you think? That you have wishes?

Whom can I love?
Who can love me?

To whom can I write this letter
Which flowers unwritten in me?
To you, my sister in heaven,
I can write as to a gentleness,
As to an approval.
You listen to my words serenely
As at the time when I asked you:
"Shall we take the dolls for a walk?"

I feel again a child's security,
Unhurt trust.

I sit down to write. I write: "The Earth, October the 25th.
Dear sister,
Since we met
I have done so many things out of wickedness and confusion
That I have completely spoiled the world.
How can I live in this world
Which because of me suffers and hates?
Ah, sister, understand
How impossible life becomes with the years!
Now only heaven can content me
Only existence quite renewed,
Friends, new and eager to forgive,

I myself good and clear as at the time
When our doll Fanny still lived.
Farewell, darling sister!
And I thank you because already I feel
How peace streams
Like a storm into my heart.
I am again with you
In our innocent home
And we play gaily and boldly
Because we know we are approved of."

MASTERPIECES

In my royal childhood
I lived magnificently
With my noble young sisters and brothers

I know still how sacredly we gleamed
When we met to play
in that moving summer

We did not forget any rites
Of the lofty game,
Every gesture
Stands yet as a lovely pattern
Before my eyes.

We were perfect, as of the most ancient birth
As small mild Chinese
Indescribably ripe and distant.

THE DEAD YOUNG MAN

Sleeps the charming boy
Who knew so little how to live on earth.

How touching were his mistakes!
He neglected to succeed;
He wanted only to be, not to do.
With Eastern indifference he looked at the frenzy

And asked: "Why should I?"

He loved his garden,
The indulgent soil

With which he could have intercourse without speaking.
His spade talked eloquently,
And the soil made its deep answer.

Farewell, dear foreigner on the earth:
Where you wander now in a familiar country
You find the spirit of the earth
The true all-comprehending spirit
Which includes you, too.

DAY OF RECONCILIATION

How shall I bid you welcome, my beloved,
When at the end of the darkness we shall meet again?
Isn't it forbidden and unnatural
That one who has gone through a sacred Hell
And stands yet in the shade and splendour of the night
Encounters one who does not carry the black weight of the Universe?

You're too untouched and light for me,
My own responsible and ripened heaviness
Is not terrestrial quality
And puts the gulf of spirit between us.

From my deep region, from the first spiritual places,
Inferno, the first Heaven,
Is the way upwards to the life on Earth
To all the lightly hovering days,
Not possible for me.

O, may you never
Sink into the spirit-land
Into the heavy life of Paradise!
This heart, my love,
Would like to bear the crushing night alone
And not begrudge you, dear, your morning life.

And yet the fall, my love,
Down into night and space
Is wonderful and plunging happiness.
The only way, my love,
To all true lightnesses and morning-stars.

PREFACE TO SASSOON

By T. A. GARDINER

Criticism of the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon consists almost entirely of surface-skimming comments in surveys of modern literature. This seems regrettable in view of the fact that many poets of to-day — Eliot, Auden, and Dylan Thomas, for instance, who are by no means at the end of their literary tether, are regularly being considered, while Sassoon, who as poet appears to be as good as finished, remains neglected. A study of one who is a contemporary, therefore, will not be out of place.

He was born in September, 1886, and came from a wealthy family who had their roots in Baghdad and Toledo. They were cultured: his mother was an artist and the sister of a celebrated sculptor. After Marlborough, he went to Cambridge, but he showed more interest in poetry, lawn tennis and hunting than in the academic grind. For several years he lived in London, and here the bulk of his pre-war poetry was written.

This consists of lyrics that are not very striking. He gives the impression throughout that he is searching for a subject, but cannot find one that adequately stimulates him. He takes a delight in natural objects, but he is not always successful in transmitting that delight to the reader, and his fervour often appears to be spent before he has reached where he wants to be. His descriptions are pretty, but hardly impressive; the reader can pass from one to another without being moved by any of them. Moreover, they tend to be threadbare; he talks about "spired woods", planets "winking", birds making "a merry din"; pools are "darkling"; nimrods, dryads and fauns turn up too frequently. The general feeling is of flatness.

There are, however, promising flashes of individuality. One of the best in this group is the much anthologized "Morning Express". He seems to have difficulty in starting, and there is a danger that he is going to stop and the poem fizzle out. But once he has conquered his nervous breathlessness, it reads more easily. He heaps on the fuel of figures of speech, and travels to a satisfying conclusion. And there are other pieces which stand out because of their unaffected ease and rhythm. At times they remind us of Shelley in his sweeter moments:

> Clear the sunlit steeples chime
> Mary's coronation time.

And again:

> I listen for him through the rain
> And in the dusk of starless hours,
> I know that he will come again —
> Loth was he ever to forsake me:
> He comes with glimmering of flowers
> And stir of music to awake me.

The First World War would be the war to end wars: so it was widely felt, and with that sentiment, to borrow Professor Grierson's wit, youth banded together in the last volunteer army to leave England. If any of them had any literary inclination they had no difficulty in finding material. And the war produced an exhilaration in poetry at first, a joy in English traditions. The battlefield was where you could find good, healthy comradeship that had no equal. Such feelings produced poems like Hardy's "Men Who March Away". Then followed the true revelation of the bestiality, the waste and terror of war, and Sassoon was one of the first to express this change in outlook. He had enlisted and was sent to France as a second lieutenant. The war eventually made him a pacifist.

War to a sensitive mind like his was horrible and his poetry became different. There is no searching for a subject nor the uncertainty of expressing it. The naïve stammer has gone, and maturity has been very quickly born of suffering. An assessment of his war poetry can easily develop into sheer panegyric because in it he is at his best. He shows war in all its sickly misery and holds nothing back. "All squalid, inglorious and abject elements in war should be remembered," he says. "The intimate mental history of any man who went to the war would make unheroic reading." And so, in *Counter Attack*, which Wilfrid Owen found more frightening than the real one, he writes:

> The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy legs
> High-booted, sprawled and grovelled along the saps
> And trunks face-downward in the sucking mud,
> Wallowed like trodden sandbags, loosely filled;
> And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair
> Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.

So many lives had been wasted, but in "Arms and the Man" he shows that just as miserable is the fate of those who are crippled. He attacks in "Base Details" the generals who work in safety at a distance. He attacks in "They" the placid and uncertain Church and in "The Effect" the superficial remarks of hack journalists. There is no glory, but rather wretchedness and cowardice. In "The Hero" he describes an incident which must have been common, where the mother who has lost her son is allowed to believe that he died a brave warrior. As for himself, he longs for the old days of home comforts and country pursuits: "There was no hope of sitting by the fire with a book after a good day's hunting." We find this nostalgia in "When I'm among a blaze of lights" and in that delightful piece of chatty monologue "The Old Huntsman".

Sassoon was followed by several poets with variations on his theme. But naturally, to quote one critic, "many of the literary results of this international psychosis have a purely pathological significance". For the war poetry that will be remembered will not be the type saturated with patriotism, pacifism, or horror, to the exclusion of everything else, but

that which transcends mortal troubles and gives them a universal treatment. This probably is why so many of those war-poets are now just names. Nor have C. H. Sorley, Robert Nichols, F. W. Harvey, Edward Shanks, and Edward Tennant worn too well. Edward Thomas deserves more attention; Chatto and Windus are reviving interest in Isaac Rosenberg; Rupert Brooke, whose promise was debatable, rarely holds us after adolescence. On the other hand, the poems of Wilfrid Owen rank highly, and justly so, for not even Sassoon reached the wideness of outlook and the inexplicable satisfaction given to us in "Strange Meeting" and "Anthem for Doomed Youth". These are individual, but much of Owen's work is strongly influenced by Sassoon. He refers to his "recent attempts in the Sassoon manner" and "Dulce et Decorum est" and "Disabled" might have been written by the elder poet.

Siegfried Sassoon has not maintained the pace he kept with Owen. His post-war work, except for occasional war pieces, is disappointing when compared with his past achievements. We are reminded of the early poet, flat, rarely inspired and searching for subject. He tries his hand at satirical poems which usually end up as damp squibs. He has not the axe of a Juvenal to grind nor the smacking turn of phrase of a Dryden or a Pope. He often attempts metres over which he has not absolute control, and weaves into his texture groups of words which would give a cleverer craftsman a headache before he could use them, if at all, without awkwardness:

> The Self-appointed Representative
> Of anti-Christ in Europe having been chosen
> As War-Dictator, we are pledged to live
> With Violence, Greed and Ignorance as those in
> Controllership of Life . . .

It is to be expected that a poet who had so much to say about the first world war has something to say about the second. But he has less to tell us. Such poems as "Litany of the Lost" show a man who has lost his faith in humanity's power in the world:

> In breaking of belief in human good,
> In slavedom of mankind to the machine,
> In havoc of hideous tyranny withstood
> And terror of atomic doom foreseen,
> Deliver us from ourselves.

The question might be asked: Is it possible for Siegfried Sassoon to publish poetry written during the second war comparable with that of the first? This would be difficult, for though the war must have stirred him he did not see it from the trenches. The first-hand experience of the fighting had caused the spark, and seldom in his poetic life does he seem to have been ablaze.

THE BOY

ALAN SMITHIES

He came into the café where I sat
In abstract thought, reviewing faded days.
I looked beyond my cigarette, and met
My childhood in another's candid gaze.

A boy of six with shy and country blood
And blue untroubled eyes, he smiled at me;
And I returned his smile, for there he stood,
My hopeful ghost, disturbing memory.

This meeting was not in time's testament;
There were no words to say. Our eyes once crossed
And then six mute, remembered summers went
Away with him — my childhood that was lost.

So from one figured ceiling of the mind
A light blazed once; then memory was blind.

ELEGY FOR A FARMER'S SON

ALAN SMITHIES

I can recall the times we met
wearing such masks as strangers wear.
I see a youth with stubborn set
of mouth, and an uneasy air;
I see eyes dark with inward thought,
as of some conflict still unfought.

Behind the prison bars which each
erects to hide the tears or laughter,
eyes met, half alien; and our speech
was desultory, brief; and after,
you were a broad back turned, or feet
moving to field or village street.

Now you are dead. The tractor lies
aslant the fallen, nerveless hand.
At intervals a lapwing cries,
you do not hear or understand:
still sings the peewit to the plough
but you belong to silence now.

DESERT WIVES

BARBARA DE SEYSSEL

Who knows the loneliness of desert wives
With nothing but the wind for company?
Red roars the sun, day after day,
The men scrape back their chairs and clump away.
Doors slam . . . the wind escapes inside
To give the dresser cups a vicious shake . . .
More dust to lay . . .
More bread and pies to bake . . .

Outside, the washing leaps to get away;
It kicks the sky in frenzy, but is tied
Like you, it cannot run and hide
Among the cans and rubbish, in the weeds
That quiver on the bottom of this sea,
Dried out in land. No pavements. Sand.
No friends across the street;
It's sixty desert miles before we meet.

And so it goes.
As the dawn-sky lightens, so it blows . . .
But not for you, for those
The desert loves, the quiet few
Who stay and pile the stones
Against the coyote's cry . . .
Against your bones.

TRUTH AND TRADITION

OLIVE LINNELL

Tradition must betimes give place to Truth,
When man's expanding spirit outgrows youth
And sees, beyond the Form's restrictive range,
Reality involving drastic change.
Thus Christ revealed, expounding what was true:
"'Twas said of old, but I say unto you."
More zeal for growth, He showed, would be desired
In all who t'wards a search for Truth aspired.
And as we ponder, we shall come to see
How wider vision brings simplicity.

CLOSED DOORS

FANNY MOORE

The eye instructs the brain:
Inform the heart that sunset never was
More lovely to behold,
Cerise, amber and eau de nil
In fold on chiffon fold,
All veiled in vitreous gold.
The heart replies:
Eye sees, brain knows
How wondrously it glows;
Alas, I cannot feel,
My portals are of stone,
And he who would have thrown
Them wide, my doorkeeper, is gone.

BRIEFS

FRANCES JOHNSON

I

Two loves have I.
One wrought in pain and grief,
The other fair and gay
As sunlight on a leaf.

II

I see her now
The child I love so dearly.
Running with the wind,
Singing with its voices,
Waist deep in swaying grasses,
Eyes aglow.

III

Do you know a garden
Where in the evening one may sit
With scent of wild thyme,
Mignonette,
And listen to the nightingale?
Take me there, Traveller,
For I am weary.

THE SCIENCE OF POETRY

By ALUN LLEWELLYN

The fate of poetry has recently been much discussed. In the past year or two a very determined effort has been made to revive what was on all hands admitted to be an economically-dying art; and success not quite of esteem alone has attended some, though few, plays in verse and some, though few, literary reputations.

That poetry is still accepted as a normal means of communication between the writer and the public, in any way comparable to its acceptance in the past, would be doubted equally by the public, the writer, and that important means of communication, the publisher.

The writer blames the public or the publisher. And most literary examination of the problem is on that line of argument or else represents criticism by one school of literary method of another and deviationist faction.

But if there is a public distrust of poetry in this generation, after so long a period of history in which the poet has been accepted as an essential and honourable factor in society, may not the fault lie with poets? If modern society puts certain material obstacles in the way of appreciation of what the poet, or indeed any other artist, has to express, is not the fault with the artist in failing to adapt the current media of thought to himself and in seeking the less heroic method of allowing himself to be adapted to them? If so diverse a number of poetic traditions could impose themselves on their time through Homer, Taillefer, Lorenzo di Medici, Milton, Dante, Lope de Vega, Langland or Camoens, how is it that the impact of known modern poets is comparatively so light?

It would be invidious to take any name now famous in literary circles for such comparison. But the point to be made is that, whereas most of the earlier writers of verse succeeded, with their companion schools, in setting their mark on the rank and file of the citizenry, no such phenomenon is evident to-day. In the quarries of Sicily captive Athenian soldiery sang the works of Euripides; the Song of Roland was on Taillefer's lips in the van of attack at Senlac. If the modern soldier seeks such inspiration it is not, as a general rule, from the pages of any contemporary poet that he relieves the march or his fatigues. He invents his own ballads.

This is strange, for so much of modern verse-writing is self-consciously modern and in its attempt to be new aims at a subject and at a treatment which may be presumed to appeal to the Common Man. On the other hand it is possible to detect a current reaction from the "proletarian" school of a-tonal, unrhythmic, unformed verse towards either the private world of a sur-realist sort or the facilities of a beauty which has the fashionable appeal of the high-class couturier.

But it is the purpose of this article to argue that poets have not made the conquest of society because, far from in fact reflecting or refracting social thought, they have done no more than mirror its vaguer doubts. They have supplied no kind of lens to concentrate the modern mood and the novelties they seek to provide are nothing new, but only repetitions of the romantic-revolutionary method derived from the Wordsworth of the Lyrical Ballads, the visions of Blake or the populist rhetoric of Whitman.

The philosopher's stone which will find for the twentieth century something to transform its conflict of ideas into a true gold of poetry is yet to appear, exactly as in politics the definite and constructive faith which will preserve democracy from its logical decline into red or black totalitarianism has yet to be discovered. The mass-philosophies result from nothing but the absence of a positive faith which is felt by each individual as his own. Contemporary verse mirrors this negation in its picture of a generation that stoops to folly and puts another record on the gramophone — with no emotion or regret since it has so short a way to stoop. But however much the truth of a mirror may be admired — and it is in fact never true — no one resorts to it for that version of the world which an artist can create. No one, that is, who has higher standards than Narcissus.

For some time both the artist and society have recognized this alienation between them. Milton was no less a secretary of foreign affairs for being a poet, nor Lorenzo less a statesman. Indeed it was not until the Industrial Revolution that the artist, as a class, was expected to be expelled from practical affairs into a Vie de Bohème which, unfortunately, he romanticized and accepted. Late Victorian and Edwardian society, in which the older Philistinism had softened into a drawing-room unreality, welcomed the artificialities of Pre-Raphaelitism and the Celtic Twilight as it welcomed the equally other-worldly but compensatory violence of a Kipling. The poet was still a creature flittering indistinctly on the edge of distant horizons — and made quite a forte of it.

But after the collapse of nineteenth-century economy in the German war of 1914, the harsh realities which, in this country in particular, a lengthy peace had disguised for so many, precipitated poets into a Waste Land where all values were denied since some of them had proved artificial. Salvation was sought in worship at the twin shrines of Marx and Freud; the intellectual fodder of the day nourished a school which, in poetry as in other literature, sought refuge from the despair of the individual mind in the consolations of the Io and the Mass.

The Romantic-Revolutionary trend was a reaction against the Reason of the classical school. It was part of a logical process which followed the Age of Faith with the Renascence of the Intellect and then tempered Intellect with Reason. Individual liberty was not merely denied as a matter of practice by the Mass-and-Machine state but denied as a sin against the unholy ghost of the Economic-and-Racial Whole.

This was in itself not a new creed from which poets could derive the inspiration of new discovery, but the worn-out and cynical conclusion of four centuries of enquiry. Its negation of the personal mind went together with its negation of every ground of belief, with its negation of civilization and society. Red or black totalitarianism was nothing but a surrender of man's active and enquiring spirit to the domination of the mechanical contrivances he had created to serve his communities and which had, by their mindless efficiency, overwhelmed him.

The poet had done nothing to react against this spiritual subjugation; the dominant schools wrote either without form or logic in pursuit of sub-conscious imagist shadows, or in harsh rhythms repetitive of statement without analysis or complained that the Revolutionary ideal had ended not with a bang but with their own whimper.

Now, with the collapse of the last hope in the virtues of an economic totalitarianism as opposed to its parallel "racial" form, it is no wonder that poets begin to ask themselves — what is the future of poetry?

The answer is that it must acquire but a true comprehension of the scientific enquiry which has made this century worthy not of destruction but of a fresh Renascence of achievement.

The popular mind is, in fact, a great way ahead of the poetic mind. The worst excesses of pulp-literature with its Supermen and Flying Saucers, its magical physics and interstellar-travel mythologies, show at least some grasp, however ill-informed and uncritical, of the possibilities within the reach of human energy. It is not improper to see some parallel, in this half-expectant, half-apprehensive wonder at new things, with the marvels of Mandeville which preceded the factual romance of the discovery of a New World; or with the alchemical fantasies which acted as precursors to the science of the seventeenth century. Man has lost faith in his divinity, his mind, and at last in his physical nature. What is needed is not a Renascence of Learning but a Renascence of Man himself.

It is among poets even more than among philosophers that this must arise; for the arts make use of a man's physical senses to instruct his mind and control his spirit. And in poetry all other arts are contained. The forces within the atom are forces within himself; the rhythms of light and sound, the mysterious balance in which the world itself is held, are things of which he himself is a part. His physical structure is part of a pattern to which the pictorial or musical images of poetry give a concentrated form. And the mastery of nuclear fission or of the energy we call electricity is nothing but part of that ordered discipline of intellect which the forms of poetry impose on man's most violent emotions.

The new poetry must be that which reverses the process of thought to control instinct through a reason which leads intellect to the vision of what informs both man and what he can conceive of the universe.

The nature of the physical world came consciously to man when first

he set himself to express it in the colour and form of the paintings of Cro-Magnon and in who knows what patterns of speech or music which gave shape and order to his feeling and his thought. Now, in a wider knowledge which takes us to the confines of the physical and the more-than-physical, it must be the purpose of poetry through its own discipline of rhyme and design to reach that harmony which derives from understanding, from mastery and belief.

VOICES ACROSS THE SEAS

I THINK, WHEN MAN FIRST KNEW THE WORD

("In the beginning was the Word"—*St. John*)

GUSTAV DAVIDSON

I think, when man first knew the Word,
The noise of growing things he heard;

As in the music of the spheres
It is the silence that he hears;

The same that light makes in its leap
Across the aeons of the deep;

Of which all time itself may be
The ticking of eternity.

(New York)

TELEPHONE WIRES

RUTH MILLER

Child in the long grass, hearing the singing wires,
As the wind winds a skein of chords, and veers.
Ear to the pole she stands — wind in her listening face,
Hearing the song-thrum throbbing against her ears.

Child in the long grass clings to the blackened pole,
Shaken, she feels her fingertips shake like breath.
Throbbing, she feels her eardrums throb to the sound
Of voices that speak of grocers, and cash, and death . . .

Child in the long grass, knowing naught of this,
Thinks that the wind spoke, for her private bliss . . .

(Johannesburg)

DYLAN THOMAS YES AND NO

READERS BEG TO DIFFER

The unique step which was taken by the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* in printing two independently-written reviews of Dylan Thomas's "Collected Poems 1934-1952," one for, the other against, has received all-round appreciation. Readers were invited to support John Graddon (Yes) or Geoffrey Johnson (No), and here is a selection of their delightfully outspoken comments.

The controversy that is emphasized in the letters here published need not cease with them: it concerns more than one "modernist" writer, and *The Poetry Review* welcomes further correspondence on a wider plane.

AN EMOTIONAL VACUUM

Having read Geoffrey Johnson's review of the work of Dylan Thomas, one can easily imagine Mr. Johnson's reactions when confronted with Vincent Van Gogh's famous picture of sunflowers. Out would come the microscope which would immediately be applied to the top right-hand corner; then painstakingly Mr. Johnson would inspect every inch of the canvas and finally pontificate that the said flowers were botanically incorrect and bore no real resemblance to the natural article. This close inspection would unfortunately prevent his standing back and allowing the glorious richness and warmth of colour to play upon his senses.

I am the first to agree that there can be no deep appreciation of art without effort, but I would suggest that Mr. Johnson's whole approach has been wrong to this most exciting of our contemporary poets.

Dylan Thomas, in his poetry, does not describe a scene to us or an event or person, but how he feels about a scene, an event or a person.

I would be the last to suggest that I understand every detail of Dylan Thomas's work — indeed, I doubt whether Dylan Thomas himself would make such a claim. But I do know that his words convey excitement and emotion to me as do the works of no other modern poet.

T. E. Van den Bergh.

THE WHOLE ISSUE

The question of Dylan Thomas, it seems to me, involves more than the work of any one writer. In essence, it includes the whole issue of modernism versus traditionalism in verse. And this issue in turn revolves about one all-important basic fact: for three thousand years or more the poetry of the western world has been built around several root-conceptions, of which a musical rhythm has been one, though perhaps the foremost and least dispensable has been immediacy of communication, the transmission of moods, ideas or emotions from mind to mind with as great a clarity as the poet's skill made possible.

It is at least theoretically conceivable that some writer of genius will be able to devise principles of greater efficacy than those that have withstood the test of millennia. But they would have to give to poetry a new lift, a new power, a new

majesty, a new appeal. They will never, I submit, be found by coyly printing verse in geometrical patterns, nor by turgidities concerning "the madhouse boards worn thin by my walking tears", or "an imagining of tumbled mantime Suddenly cold as fish", or "Rape and rebellion in the nurseries of my face".

It is not by affectations, conceits and murkiness, which only sew confusion and spread darkness, that a poet can hope to rise to the pinnacle of a new manner and a new method.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

MASTERING THE DIFFICULT

While I appreciate Geoffrey Johnson's attitude I agree with John Graddon. Speaking personally, Dylan Thomas created the same confusion in me as apparently he does in Mr. Johnson. I admired the simpler poems and struggled to penetrate the difficult. They remained closed. Yet I would not give in, possibly because I found his work exciting: it was different.

Then in the lifting of a lid I was initiated. Chiefly, I think, when I realized that his symbols, images, were largely biblical and erotic; intensely personal. It was a key and opened doors previously closed.

Later at Oxford, I did some criticism of poetry according to the Cambridge school of thought (Dr. Leavis I believe), when one line at a time is dissected. And I chose a poem by Dylan Thomas called, "Unto Her Lying Down Head". It exacted concentration but was most rewarding. Following his labyrinth was a Yeats's journey to Byzantium, or a Coleridge vision of Kubla Khan.

I know how infuriating it can be when you want to understand a poet and cannot. One thing, do not try too hard, — it defeats its own end. And if Dylan Thomas is, as Mr. Johnson says, egocentric, he is so in a universal sense, for what he writes of is of man. Man that is all men. The love poem quoted, "This Story's Monster has a Serpent Caul", heavy with natural and biblical imagery, is one of his best.

I think it is true, as Mr. Graddon says, that the English traditionalist will be long becoming reconciled to this Welsh poet's fervour, his plethora of images, his frequent intoxication with words.

MADGE HALES.

YES *AND* NO

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines genius as "instinctive and extraordinary imaginative, creative or inventive capacity." It would seem that John Graddon and Geoffrey Johnson have one opinion in common about Dylan Thomas: that he has genius.

But Dylan Thomas, as a poet, is young. His faults, as Mr. Johnson points out, are many. Only occasionally has he achieved "that momentary peace which is a poem" as in "Fern Hill". And the treatment of his chief subject matter; love is a theme of many great traditional poets, led by Shakespeare. Where love has been written of with depth of truth and beauty, there is surely no more universal theme, and none simpler to communicate (Mr. Johnson's acid test). As a young poet, Dylan Thomas seems to me lacking in depth and poise. To the question "Dylan Thomas, yes or no, as a major poet?" the future alone has the answer.

C. B. TOOSEY.

NOT YET

Thomas has spared himself nothing in finding the forceful word and epithet. In consonant and vowel he makes music. But the inner ear he has not yet attuned devotedly to the voice of the Greater Spirit, the Reality, the Unity; and he does not yet retell the Melody that is there. His impact on this generation, and therefore on future generations, in spite of his supporters' claims and the awards he is granted, is of a verbal nature only, and limited.

JOHN HOFFMAN.

SOUND WITHOUT SENSE

Geoffrey Johnson's concluding statement aptly assesses Dylan Thomas. Like a child learning to speak he has the gift of words; the poet is there — the singing, musical voice — but it is undisciplined, incoherent. His hearers understand only by occasional intuitive inference.

The blame lies perhaps at the doors of those over-erudite gentlemen, the poet-publisher-critics, whose appraisal of apparent profundity has encouraged verbal obscurity. Mr. Thomas may have discovered early that allusive, half-uttered, evasive intricacies were more acceptable than simple, understandable verse!

Many who laud Dylan Thomas follow the vogue of "sound" poetry: "take care of the sounds, and the sense will take care of itself!" What nonsense! The function of language is communication, or one may as well invent an entirely new jargon, string it together into pleasing sound-patterns, and label it "poetry".

Poetry is emotional experience crystallized into laconic, lucid language, the message is the heart of the statement; however ingeniously contrived, phrases without meaning or message are not valid poetry. They are as a tale told by an idiot, with only the significance and relevance of lunacy.

There is undoubtedly a true poet latent in Dylan Thomas, but it is time "the child of his nation" grew up, and learned to speak intelligibly.

EVE WILSON.

MATEY

The Acid Test. Geoffrey's quest is private and prejudiced, the negative result reached by too strenuous methods. He replaces stepping-stones characteristically kicked away by the poet; labours for ore chiefly in the "visceral" groove; bespatters with adjectives unequal objects, down to one lone phrase from the dancing imagery of Childhood's encounters with Time. He denounces "violets", (although adult poets, including Day Lewis and himself, occasionally "remember"); commends no singing line, no shining metaphor; mishandles the "touchstone" method with grave consequences in "Refusal to mourn . . . "; is bewildered by the complexities of the "angel of the abyss", discovering aphrodisaical significance only; squanders an unwilling week, and gets a headache.

The Interior Life. In this objective study, John's universal findings answer beforehand Geoffrey's personal and uneasy conclusion. He invokes a poet of heritage becoming universal in the many stratas of himself, striding "in two levels", using his determined images, loving man, praising God. By choice of arresting lines, John woos to a "line upon line" understanding of the "sullen art" and, by concern for the age, warns against neglect. We gather that contact is made by the passive apprehension exposed to the activity of the poetry, rather than by fevered probings.

JANE.

THE POET AS PRIEST

The ancients listened to the poet as to a priest. A poet was a prophet inspired by God. He sang of beauty, love, and truth, of life beyond the grave. His genius painted the glories of realms invisible; he told of man's immortal pilgrimage to union with God. The first poems were prayers, spiritual vibrations attuning earth to heaven. God was real. Life was magic. The poet gave men hope.

The Muse has fallen from spirit down to matter. To-day our poets preach despair; lacking form and light, their poems show chaos. Life for them has no meaning, all ends in death. Poets look at the world to see distortions of their own souls.

Writers tell us this is an age of realism, that literature must copy life. But what is reality? What is life? Science shows matter to be energy, the universe as vibrations in harmony, every atom thrilling with life. Mathematicians reveal multi-dimensional space-time; spiritualists demonstrate life after death.

Our poets claim to express the age. Should not the age express them? In olden days men sought consolation from poets. What inspiration could they get to-day?

Of course, these sentiments are old-fashioned; but they are eternal.

W. R. Drake.

THE MASTER

(Tribute to Walter de la Mare on his Eightieth Birthday April 25th, 1953)

LAWRENCE W. HOCKEY

In years an old man, yet in spirit young,
Great master of the art of Poesie,
With songs among the loveliest ever sung,
He speaks the language of Eternity.

EDITORIAL LETTER-BOX

HACKNEYED SUBJECTS

Dear Sir.—Shelley, in his *Defence of Poetry*, said "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar". One can scarcely improve upon this bold and simple phrasing. There are no hackneyed subjects: though Man's deepest emotions are as old as time, the true poet can "lift the veil" from such familiar things as love, death, Spring and the song of nightingales, and startle us into a new appreciation. I wonder why Mr. Boycott thinks nightingales hackneyed and galloping horses not? People who live in the North never hear nightingales, people who live on the Camargue have a surfeit of galloping horses. To tell people of what they do not know is merely to instruct them: the poet does more than this — he throws new light on what we thought we knew.

D. E. A. Rash.

Book Reviews . . .

NO TIME FOR COWARDS

By ROY CAMPBELL

No Time for Cowards, by Phoebe Hesketh. Preface by Herbert Palmer (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).

A Change of World, by Adrienne Rich. With a foreword by W. H. Auden (Yale University Press, $2.50).

In a lengthy preface to the second of these first-class books Mr. Auden negatively pontificates. Any word by or about Mr. Auden is still of great importance. Like Southey in his day, he is a *symbol,* whose diagnostic value will survive most of his verse, though his poetical machinery comprises one of the most sensitive jet-engines, propelled rearward, by "wind-up", in a world where they are very common.

This veteran adolescent in his life-time pilgrimage from undergraduate Oxford back to the cradle has always so fanatically shunned any experience compatible with adult responsibility that it is with no surprise that we find him protracting his puberty, and still as incapable of generating an idea as when he started. Those ideas with which he startled the old fogeys of the thirties were taken over ready-made from the Freudian clinic and the Marxist summer schools before they lost their kick.

The nearest he can get nowadays to affirming an idea (an adult function) is round the back way, by making negative generalizations.

Poetry "must not bellow", and it "must not tell fibs": though it respects its elders, it "must not be cowed by them". If only it were as simple as that! These are the requirements of the vicarage croquet-lawn, not of the rough ascent of Parnassus. And, for every Tupper or Southey rescued by such standards from oblivion, a Marlowe, a Byron, a Quevedo, a Lope, a Jonson, a Rimbaud, would be consigned to the rubbish-heap.

It seems difficult to identify the irreverent tom-boy of the thirties with this fogeyfied figure who seems to have survived his mortal span. When he does make a single positive assertion it is not as a result of thinking but of generalizing (an alibi for thought) like a civil servant and dividing poets into age-groups as if they were "man-power" or machine-fodder. "Every poet," he says, "under fifty-five cherishes a secret grudge against Providence for not getting him born earlier". If there is one thing that is independent of Time and survives its fashions and "Zeitgeists", it is poetry. True poetry is always *here and now* when it is written and for generations after.

No Time for Cowards is prefaced by Mr. Herbert Palmer, whose affirmations are refreshing after Mr. Auden's evasions and negatives. *No Time for*

Cowards is a truly splendid book of verse which says what it means and owes as much to human experience as to skilled and beautiful writing. Miss Hesketh writes with great strength and many critics have compared her to Emily Brontë. Her emotional power is balanced by her intellectual resources. She deals in ideas as well as feelings, so that they always combine and neither unduly preponderates. Her visual imagery is vivid and precise and illustrates with sinewy verve a penetrating intellect at work on profound thoughts and strong feelings. Most of the poems are short, compact, finished in form, yet glowing with natural, robust life. Her technical perfection and controlled energy are derived from hard work due to her love of her art. And, unlike Mr. Auden, she enjoys life in spite of the tragedies and difficulties.

Miss Rich deserves far more for *A Change of World* than the negative, evasive praise of Mr. Auden. She is only twenty-one, and she writes with skill, charm, and freshness. She is more purely literary and academic than Miss Hesketh, deriving rather from the college library than the world of cities, mountains, and seas, as one sees from frequent echoes of her well-chosen models (Yeats, Eliot, and Frost). But she devotes exquisite care to the quality and texture of her workmanship. This is a remarkable book for so young an author, who will make a name for herself if she develops on these lines.

PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Joy and Verity, by Marie Stopes (Hogarth Press, 6s.).

Dr. Marie Stopes keeps her best wine until the last. Her supreme achievement is the poetic drama, "Antigone Awakened", a composition of truly classical dignity as well as of genuine originality. The writer is daringly successful in altering the unsatisfactory Sophoclean resolution of the heroine's dilemma; Antigone is convincingly made to achieve a feat even more difficult than to die for an idea: she lives for it. This is the optimism our war-shattered world so sorely needs, optimism achieved only through spiritual ardour and courage, and how magnificently the author puts it. (Antigone speaks):—

> Men are too apt to mar — too hot to slay —
> In one swift moment to undo love's work
> Brought to perfection in three hundred moons . . .
> The noblest crown a kingly brow can wear
> Is flower-wreathed with shining gentleness . . .

This is only one moment of all-illuminating vision, and there are many, in this austerely wrought but deeply moving and eminently actable play.

The positiveness of the gnomic title poem, though brave and refreshing

in these days, is hampered by the rigidity of its stanzaic form; some of the units in isolation are perfect, but the logical linkage is not always clear. The sonnets are better, and best of all when the author avoids vague and vast abstractions like Life or Beauty; she is most powerful when personally moved, as almost any one of the ten love sonnets and several of the lyrics will show.

This collection, which is briefly introduced by Walter de la Mare, and the predecessors of which were extolled by him and others of like eminence, is at first sight somewhat disappointing. An otherwise exquisite format is marred by misspellings; on top of these there are not a little outworn diction, a more than occasional mechanical inversion and a few slovenly switches from *you* to *thou* in the same context. Finally, the thought occasionally is dominated by the needs of rhyme.

PRIDE OF DORSET

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

William Barnes of Dorset, by Giles Dugdale (Cassell, 21s.).

Here is William Barnes, the Dorsetshire worthy of a hundred years ago, self-taught teacher, priest and singer, local patriot in the West-country and father of his folk. If Dorsetshire were a republic his portrait would be on the postage stamps.

Barnes was a many-sided natural genius, notable as an engraver, a schoolmaster, parson and preacher, philologist, polyglot, but he became celebrated as the man in the Poets' Corner in the provincial newspaper. He was a versifier from early youth and when he was nineteen he put together his first few pieces and got a printer in the High Street in Dorchester to issue them as a book, now a very rare item for bibliophiles, as may be imagined. But the early verse which was all written in book English attracted no attention. It was thirteen years later that he moved from Queen's English into dialect and almost at once became local bard and hero.

He spoke and taught in school and wrote letters in plain English, but he had been studying the rural dialect as he would a new language, turning from Hindustani, Persian, and Russian to the endearing *patois* of his own county. Then when the Dorset folk heard him read his new dialect poems in a hall in Dorchester there was tumultuous cheering. Thomas Hardy who was present says that Barnes met the wild applause with a "mild smile". He was a modest fellow but at the same time was terribly sure of himself. Most great men in England are also great cranks, and Barnes celebrated was Barnes genially cranky for the rest of his life, exalting the truly-rural tongue over the *mongrel* English of the cities.

In the Elizabethan age there seems to have been less dialect than now.

Certainly Shakespeare with all his rustic figures made little use of it. It was the Puritans with their snuffling who infected common speech with the nasal and the uncouth. When William Barnes uses the words "drush's aggs" instead of "thrush's eggs" it is the Puritan snuffle down the ages, and with all respect "The girt woak tree" instead of great oak tree is rather adenoidal.

Barnes wanted us to Saxonise the language, casting out all that is not Teutonic in origin and coining new Saxonisms to fill the gaps, an adjective to be called a "suchness" and a drunkard to be a "soaksome lad", and so forth. But all that is part of the charm of the man and need not be criticized severely. It was not his foibles that made him celebrated, but the intimate loveliness of his folk poems.

Some of these are like 3-dimensional films; they have depth as well as surface; they take you from your book and your chair into a ploughed field or wild flower-tangled lane and the close company of the Dorset yokel. You get right inside the country instead of merely appreciating it in a series of views. The poems succeed, and it must be admitted that much verse in dialect by other poets also succeeds. It is quite absurd to say that Tennyson failed: he succeeded all right. But readers have little patience. This book under review, with its many examples of Barnes's verse and its moving account of his life is likely to overcome some of the popular impatience with dialect and provoke a new curiosity as to the significance of the "Poet-Laureate of Dorchester".

ROOT AND FRUIT

By YORKE CROMPTON

A Hopkins Reader, selected by John Pick (Oxford University Press, 21s.).
Images of To-morrow. An Anthology of Recent Poetry, edited by John Heath-Stubbs (SCM Press, 10s. 6d.).
The Imperfect Day. A Long Poem, by Frederick Stuart Grubb (Cambridge Express Printing Co., 2s. 6d.).
London Allegiance, by Clare Campbell (Fortune Press, 6s.).

Hopkins scattered the seeds of modernity as he tripped, scrambled, and leapt across the ploughed field of his verse, illuminated by lightning-flashes of religious joy. Thus it is profitable for us to study him not only as a vital poet in himself, but as the Abraham of present versifiers, good and ill. His works are not voluminous, but they are all significant of his intense inward life; bursting into many forms, he made it hard for the reader to gain an impression of him as a whole. Dr. Pick has remedied this with a book of selections from Hopkins's poems, diaries, notebooks, drawings, sermons, prefaces, and correspondence. It gives most of his essential writing.

A more difficult task has been attempted by John Heath-Stubbs — to grade the present fruit of the field originally tilled by Hopkins, and to suggest what is to follow. His anthology gathers examples from the work of poets of whom none published a book of verse till 1939. He groups them according to their themes as patterns of growth against a spiritual skyline. Arguing that poetry touches depths not yet revealed in more external matters, he shows how the tap-roots of our newer poets may reach the well-spring nourishing the vineyards of to-morrow. From this point of view it is heartening to find that the poems here are serious and forthright. Indeed, we find the Editor saying, in an excellent Introduction, "I notice little evidence, in the manuscripts that reached me, of the continuing influence of the linguistic disturbance initiated by the work of Dylan Thomas". This is good news to be pealed out in Coronation year. We may yet be entering an age of lucidity and order.

F. S. Grubb has courageously embarked on a long poem in an effort to counteract our tendency to trifle rather than to "study works of art". Clare Campbell is effective in a lyric strain.

HONOUR IN ACTION

By JOHN GRADDON

Heroic Poetry, by C. M. Bowra (Macmillan, 40s.).

A colonel of the British Army, long retired, happened to see the title of this book, and commented: "Into the valley of death-stuff, eh?" It was a natural confusion of substance with form.

The conception of heroism and heroes of honour is widespread. It is only absent where the people have not advanced beyond extolling and lamenting the dead. In the form of heroic poetry it has died when the peoples have ceased to listen to their singers. In Sir Maurice Bowra's enthralling and portentously remarkable analysis of the songs and the reports of honour in action he quotes Tacitus saying of Arminius, Prince of the Cherusci, "he is still sung among barbarian peoples", thus explaining not only the mintrelsy itself, but also the decline in the making and singing of heroic poetry on an assumption of sophistication.

Heroic Poetry ranges over two widely separated historical periods. There is the ancient period, of which the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* the old German *Hildebrand,* the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf,* the French song of *Roland,* the Spanish *Poema del Cid,* are examples; and then, during the last hundred and fifty years, there are the ballads taken down from living bards. This second period is not yet ended, for the art continues in many parts of the world "because it answers a real need of the human spirit".

In heroic poetry there is always a story to be told and in it, possibly because the audience confronted the bard, everything is subordinated to

the running action. Often this physical intensity of action is so vividly related that the blood stirs yet again:

> Each strained at the other from the saddle
> Till the eight hoofs of their horses were mingled.
>
> And I turned my mare and sprang, like a lion in the seizing.

Honour recks little of the enormity of consequence, for death is a wholly fitting end to the heroic life. Heroism in itself is seldom sufficient. The hero is a man of special qualities but he must have an aim or a cause, unless he is, sufficiently, a king or leader.

The same theme is to be found in many a language or many a country, for the heroic tradition is conservative in a special way. "What matters is its structure — not its temper or its setting or its personalities." As for the bard himself, it is he who is remembered for his recitation: the author is seldom of consequence. The narrative is the thread on which the jewels of action are strung. In describing horses, ships, and armour, of which he has knowledge, he gives great vivacity to his imagination especially when dragons, spirits, and other things belonging to the underworld and the overworld enter his story. As T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia) said of Audra, the Arabian Chief: "If he lack listeners, he would very likely sing them (his poems of raids and fights) in his tremendous voice, deep and resonant and loud."

The bard might belong to the court, or he might be the traditional boy with a gift, or blind and unable to toil, listening to his elders and visiting singers, picking his craft up where he could and exercising not only a growing and formidable memory, but the knowledge of an actor for a changing audience.

After an analysis of the varieties of heroic outlook and a discussion of the relation of heroic poetry to history, subtle, bizarre, factual, Sir Maurice comes to the decline of heroic poetry into the romance, the ballad, the conscious literary narrative. "What is surprising", he writes, "is its remarkable hold on life":

> Of all branches of literature, except the song, it seems to last the longest, and to maintain its character with the least changes. Because it is certain of its values and displays them in concrete, persuasive shapes, it has a strength denied to many more sophisticated forms of art. The poet presents a living world, as complete and as solid as he can make it.

This is a fascinating book, full of light on the tempestuous stories of man being greater than himself, staking his life on his honour, rejecting the pallid world of the commonplace; and for those of us who can be still moved by valour, stories told in spirited and reverberating narrative, it rekindles a love for such poetry, to be read again in our own heroic times. That it is comprehensively erudite needs no emphasis here.

THE SEVEN-STRINGED LYRE

By GEOFFREY JOHNSON

An Italian Visit, by C. Day Lewis (Jonathan Cape, 7s. 6d.).

To him who prefers poetry to be sophisticated, this work, in seven parts, will be welcome; to him who likes it to be simple, sensuous, and impassioned, it will be unsatisfying. Neither reader, however, could deny the brilliance of its journalistic impressionism, its psychological subtlety in aesthetic analysis, its frequently amazing verbal and metrical cleverness.

But are these qualities enough? Too often the author seems to be the victim of his own theories — that the poet should never be direct but oblique in approach, and that he should be absolutely contemporary in his social reference, not excluding the latest and smartest slang and jargon (strip-tease, Angst, metier and so on). The danger of over-vigilance against ever giving oneself away emotionally is over-selfconsciousness of manner and too little attention to the truth and sincerity of the thing said. What ensnared another brilliant and once-fashionable Oxonian, Humbert Wolfe, may also ensnare C. Day Lewis unless he is truer to his inner self.

A little more wisdom and less desire for the limelight would have let these Italian experiences mellow in the memory until their artistic reconstruction would have been an exercise of almost pure imagination instead of what they remain, sensitive reportage. Even with these demerits, the author's fineness as a poet is abundantly clear from the second section, "The Flight", which has the imaginative adventurousness and vivid verbal dexterity we have learnt to expect from him whenever man's conquest of the air is the theme. He is even finer in the sixth section, "Elegy before Death", and though he may be unaware of it, the reason is that emotion, not analysis of his emotion, has at last got the better of him.

Though the poem is artfully rounded by prologue ("Dialogue at the Airport") and epilogue ("The Homeward Prospect"), with the roughly-defined three poetic selves acting as commentators, the whole is as loosely strung together as the scenes are, quite often, too rapidly and superficially observed. The weakest section is "Florence: Works of Art", where the description of pictures seen through the eyes of Hardy, Yeats, Roy Fuller, Auden, and Dylan Thomas strike us as very clever but quite frivolous playing at literary charades. Would not some reference to the tragedy of modern Italy torn from top to bottom by Mussolini, Hitler, and the Liberators in turn, have been a little more germane to the central theme? But no, not a word.

Again, we admire the skill with which the author contrives to convey a sense of Rome in the small compass of ten verse-pages ("Letter from Rome"), even though we suspect that it is inferior to both Du Bellay's "Antiquités" and parallel passages in "Childe Harold". We are even more disposed to suspect the taste of such references to the Protestant Cemetery as these:

> Here is one corner of a foreign field
> That is forever garden suburb,

(smart, but cheap, and also false to the memory of a great Englishman) and

> The eccentric couple you have come to visit —
> One spitting blood, an outsider and a failure,
> One sailing a boat, his mind on higher things

(a sniffing condescension to the Romantic immortals, where Silence, if nothing

better than this could be said, would have been infinitely nobler). And the Reductio ad Absurdum of stylistically flattening verse to the conversational level is to be seen in its climax:

So much for Rome.
To-morrow we shall take the bus for Florence.

But C. Day Lewis is too good a poet to remain permanently befogged and bewildered by his own sophistication and theories, and he often writes memorably, as here:

In the white piazza To-day is barely awake.
A well-water breeze freshens
Her nakedness, musky with love, and wafts about
Her breath of moist carnations . . .

THE FRENCH TRADITION

The Poetry of France. An Anthology edited by Alan M. Boase (Methuen, 16s. 6d.).

This anthology has the double merit of being an excellent choice and containing a sensitive, well-balanced introduction, very useful for the average reader in Britain as well as to "intellectuals". The poems chosen, partly new ones and partly well-known ones, are all quoted in full (e.g. Musset's "La Nuit de Mai", the great poems of Hugo, Vigny, Claudel, etc.).

The lengthy introduction is partly a study of historical perspectives and partly an analysis of the technical possibilities of verse. There are some excellent things in it, especially from the English point of view. Mr. Boase is very right in emphasizing the advantages and the disadvantages of the French tradition of explaining the texts. The advantage lies in an intellectual effort of analysis which many English people consider unnecessary; the disadvantages, an excess of intellectuality which tends to dissipate poetic atmosphere. Mr. Boase himself gives us an admirable example of what an explanation of a text should be from the English point of view, in referring himself to some of the poems he has chosen and emphasizing the analysis of construction which throws into relief the general movement and rhythm of the poem.

Even for the contemporary period, where selection is always difficult, Mr. Boase seems an excellent judge. It may be thought that he is a little too severe on St. John Perse, whilst he is too indulgent as regards Pierre Emmanuel. I would specially recommend to the reader the conclusion of this study, which shows clearly the poetic revolution which symbolism caused in France and the chassecroise of influence as between French and English poetry (from p. lxxix).

The second part "The Reading of French Verse" could not be improved upon as regards utility and intelligence, if one bears in mind certain prejudices of the English reading public. Here too there is a remarkable conclusion on the deep meaning of poetry and there is a very beautiful quotation from Valery drawing attention to the fact that first and foremost should be considered a poem (en acte?) and a way of speaking it.

Lastly, the bibliographical notes show a thorough knowledge of the best criticisms. It is unfortunately somewhat behindhand as regards the latest contemporary criticism, but this is pardonable as it is only a few months ago that several new critical studies have appeared in France, for instance on Baudelaire, Jules Romains and Rimbaud.

G. J.

A CONCLUDING QUARTET

The Elements of Death, by Jocelyn Brooke, *Within the Tavern Court,* by R. L. Cook, *Twenty-three Poems,* by R. H. Ward, *Wandering Pilgrimage,* by Ursula Wood. (*Poems in Pamphlet,* The Hand and Flower Press, 1s. each).

Just as the twelfth of this excellent series comes to hand we learn with the deepest regret that Miss Erica Marx has been compelled to decline further ventures for at least a year. This is all the more reason, however, for rushing in and buying what collections have already been made available, and at the price of a mere shilling, for discovering that the appearance alone of the tenth in the sequence, *Wandering Pilgrimage,* has more than justified her single-handed experiment.

Mr. Brooke, in *The Elements of Death,* is a little too pre-occupied with *anger,* a word which he rhymes and half-rhymes with a monotonous frequency. Moreover, those who cannot divorce moral import from art may well question whether the soldier's "gun-proud" gospel is any good to mankind. But there is no denying his strength and originality and genuine powers of incantation, which are felt at their best in the opening poem, and in "The Leader" and "Travelling South". His technical dexterity, too, in making an ordinary stanza-pattern strangely new and beautiful, largely by run-on lines and other devices, is a delight to watch.

Mr. Cook has well deserved to achieve a first collection of his verse, which has already attracted critical notice on appearing in journals here and overseas. Not only has he done valuable pioneer work for poetry at Edinburgh with his New Athenian Broadsheets, but he is a poet himself. As a lieutenant in the Navy he has had what is invaluable to any writer, a wide variety of experiences and the still more necessary contemplative silences. He still occasionally strains after effect and sometimes has a starling-like over-eagerness to mimic the tunes of his contemporaries, but at his best he has a pure and fine lyric voice.

Distinctly more cerebral and less a poet in natural endowment is Mr. Ward. In cast of thought and in verbal texture he owes not a little to the new fashions, and in his religious self-torture, which may not be to everyone's taste, he is not unlike Hopkins. Colloquial compression in the manner of the now-fashionable seventeenth century metaphysicals can also make his verse uncouth, as in "This heart's earth's compound dust, so from it grows" . . . But to one who can so haunt the reader as with "All things shall meet their end" or sing with such tragic intensity as in "The Pursuit" much is forgiven.

The best of these four authors is also technically and spiritually closest to the central tradition, a coincidence, perhaps, but worth thinking about. In *Wandering Pilgrimage* a poet seems to have emerged complete, like Pallas Athene from the head of Zeus. Ursula Wood's poetry is the poetry of light, of ecstatic affirmation, poetry that not only burns but sings; almost every page is rich with utterance such as:

> And let this mask, stone image of your face
> cry out for evermore that life was here;
> from your stone limbs be born a later race.
> Against the night your towering angel stands.

The delightful impression made by her work on the reader has just been deepened by the news that she has been chosen to collaborate with the composer, R. Vaughan Williams, in poem and song for the Queen's Garland. And no wonder!

G.J.

FINE-SPUN AND HOME-SPUN

Letter in a Bottle, by Gerald Bromhead Walker (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).
Rhymes of a Countryman, by Will Barrow (Chaterson, 5s.).
Leaves of Life, by H. N. Robbins (Watts, 5s.).
The Loves of Ivan Wantage, by Agnes C. Tucker (Stockwell, 6s. 6d.).

In technical equipment, Mr. Walker, a prize-winner in the Arts Council Festival Poetry Competition, is the best of the four; in genuine poetical power, for all his cleverness, he is the least convincing. This, his second book, is a fluent philosophical essay on man and his destiny, colloquial in style, with a headlong, half-Hudibrastic, half-Byronic manner, and in a four-stressed sonnet form with end-couplet. The verse is nimble, and in some of its feminine-rhyme effects quite acrobatic, but its pseudo-intellectualism, its telescoping and kaleidoscoping of images are too bewildering to leave much lasting impression.

More satisfactory in heart-felt substance, though much more conventional in style, are Mr. Barrow and Mr. Robbins. *Rhymes of a Countryman* are simple, direct poems with a broad appeal, though not without a tendency to the obvious. The section "Teutonic Interlude" successfully evokes the open-air gaiety of pre-war Germany, and the poems in the Dorset dialect and deriving from Barnes are not unworthy of their model. "Experience" is the best poem of the book, though some in the section "The Downward Road" run it very close.

Still further advanced in the evening of life is Mr. Robbins, who apparently was at Oxford in the nineties. As he unassumingly but truly implies, some of these pieces, collected over so many years, have now acquired a delicate period flavour. And like nearly all the nineties men, he can write verse, even if it is nearly always meticulously formal. An excellent example of his wit is "To Cupid, By the Way"; his scholarly technique is seen in a good version of what is virtually untranslatable, the Horatian "Ode to Pyrrha". His attempts as a rationalist to explain the miraculous in terms of the material as in "Christmas Carol" and the "Dream of Lucretius" are not to be despised, either.

The last, A New England writer, tells in a straightforward blank verse narrative of eighty pages the story of Ivan Wantage, of Brigit, his wife, of Ursela, his spiritual love, of Sylvia, his sexual obsession, and of Atlaca, a castaway upon the earth. The writing is competent and the blank verse of just the flexibility that avoids breaking down into prose, a feat by no means easy to achieve.

The Frog Prince and Other Poems, by Alan Barnsley, *Poems in Pamphlet, 1952* (The Hand and Flower Press, 1s.).

Though not quite as striking as some of its predecessors in this excellent series, this collection quite merits its place, and shows unquestionable promise. The author is obviously young, and as yet too subject to current influences; for example, the concealed internal rhyme, the occasional rhyming of insignificant words like conjunctions, prepositions, possessive adjectives, the fashionable monstrosity that is no rhyme by any standards (sleep-keeps), and in a deeper sense, the prevalently neurotic pre-occupation with death and disaster. All the same, several of his poems show that he has a voice not only his own but one well worth listening to.

G.J.

AS YOU PLEASE — OR YOU MUST

A Sheaf of Book-Notes by The Editorial Staff

(The inclusion of a book in this page does not preclude a subsequent review)

Whatever may be written about Shakespeare or Napoleon, Dickens or cricket, is for the collector or student what modern *slangsters* call a "must". Shakespearians, therefore, will welcome a scholarly Frenchman's study of the great dramas in relation to the other masterpieces of the Elizabethan theatre. T. S. Eliot, whose timely *Bibliography* (Faber, 25s.) is an extension of an earlier compilation, contributes an introduction to Henri Fluchere — *Shakespeare* (Longmans 25s.) — as an author of understanding and experience: "About anyone so great as Shakespeare it is probable we can never be right: and if we can never be right, it is better that we should from time to time change our way of being wrong."

Lord Oxford and the Shakespearian Group is another book to be tabulated for the student. The title (Alden Press, Oxford, 8s. 6d.) indicates Lieut-Col. Montagu W. Douglas's purpose and his summary of evidence brings in all the modern anti-Shakespeare group, including J. T. Looney. In their opinion the name Shakespeare was a mask to cover the authorship of a company of poets, Lord Oxford outstanding.

There is no equivalent argument about another of the great ones. Raymond Preston's purpose in *Chaucer* (Sheed & Ward, 25s.) is to try to interpret "Dan Geoffrey's" work to the reader of to-day. So does John Warrington in a more technical sense — *Troilus and Criseyde* (Dent, Everyman's Library, 6s.) — and both authors have accomplished their tasks admirably.

The student of classical Greece has several books to add to his personal library too. *The Life and Work of Sophocles* (Sheed & Ward, 18s.) and *Sophocles: the Dramas,* translated by Sir George Young (Dent, Everyman's Library, 7s.) are authoritative and at the same time a valuable introductory pair of books for newcomers especially. *Homer's Odyssey,* translated by S. O. Andrew (Dent, Everyman's Library, 6s.) might usefully follow these in one's course of study, and then, to make the inauguration an all-round one, a compilation in English of *Best Selections from Modern Greek Poetry,* by D. E. Tournakis (Taroussopoulos Press, Greece).

Before we turn to some of our own modern literature in recently published volumes, an anthology of *Minor Poets of the 17th Century* (Dent, Everyman's Library, 7s.) will be acceptable to English students. *Shenstone's Miscellany* (Clarendon Press, 21s.) is for the elect rather than the general reader. It is a collection of eighteenth-century verse from an MS lately discovered by the editor, Ian A. Gordon. Some of it is queer stuff:

> For Drinking will make a man quaff
> And Quaffing will make a man sing
> And Singing will make a Man Laugh
> And Laughing long Life will bring . . .

In the Life, Literature, and Thought Series an addition is *Elizabethan Lyrics* (Harrap, 10s. 6d.), edited by Professor Kenneth Muir. This is at once a scholar's book, and a bedside book for anyone else who seeks delight as well as culture in his reading. Edmund Blunden is prominent among the contributors to the fourth *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin* edited by Dorothy Hewlett (Saint Catherine Press,

7s. 6d.). Devotees of two great nineteenth-century poets must not hesitate to acquire it. Also *Keats, Shelley, and Rome: an Illustrated Miscellany* compiled by Neville Rogers (Christopher Johnson), which is a work that ought to have been mentioned in these pages long ago. *Shelley: the Last Phase* (Hutchinson, 18s.) is Ivan Roe's contribution to the drama of the poet's life in Italy, a brilliant examination of "a new Shelley" and his mysteries.

A fascinating volume in The Home University Library is *Wordsworth and Coleridge, 1795-1834,* (Oxford University Press, 6s.). The relationship of these two poets was such that the best work of both was done during their association. Neither before it nor after their estrangement did either do much of importance. H. M. Margoliouth, who was previously the author of a book on William Blake in the same series, emphasizes this with scholarship, sympathy, and admirable brevity.

The four poets dealt with in the two volumes just mentioned are included along with Byron in *The Romantic Poets,* a valuable monograph by Graham Hough (Hutchinson's University Library, 8s. 6d.). *The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry,* by E. D. H. Johnson (Princeton University Press and Geoffrey Cumberlege, 25s.), dealing with the sources of the poetic imagination of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, almost completes the list of first class poets belonging to the last century. *The Anatomy of Poetry,* by Marjorie Boulton, with an introduction by L. A. G. Strong, deals with the poets just referred to and also several of the present day. This is a helpful work, especially for those who wish for guidance in "placing" living writers in contempory literature, notably Roy Campbell.

Finally, a tribute to Lady Margaret Sackville has appeared. *Harp Aeolian:* commentaries on her work, edited by Dr. Georgina Somerville (Burrow's Press, Cheltenham, 3s. 6d.) is a work of artistic regard in which nine of her fellow-writers have joined. Lewis Spence gives the collective estimate in a few sentences: "Fashion, or ruthless dictatorship, may alter the poetic modes of an age but they cannot destroy the essential factors of poetry, as people are beginning to realize. And it is in these immortal elements that the poetry of Lady Margaret Sackville is so rich and which distinguishes it from the grossly materialistic and plantigrade verse of to-day. Its outstanding characteristic is spiritual beauty . . . "

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Following is a list of Weekly Programmes for July, Friday Evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 at 33 Portman Square. Members 1s. Non-Members 2s. "Everybody Welcome."

EPOCHS IN ENGLISH POETRY — CORONATION SERIES

July	3	Elizabethan and Ancestors: Plays and Poetry	(presented by Charles Doran)
	10	Jacobean and Restoration	(Reader: Lesley Deane)
	17	The Four Georges	(Tony Van den Bergh and John Chandos)
	24	Victorian	(Wilton Cole: Readers Winifred Habershon, Kathleen Penny and Wilton Cole)

NOTE.—Monday July 6th is the date of the Review of the Current *Poetry Review.* Readers' Opinions invited by the Editorial Board. Next Series of Readings begins in October.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS

THE GREENWOOD PRIZE AWARD 1952

This competition has become so well known that there is surely no need for the adjudicator to explain his decisions and what are his expectations as he finds himself faced with the numerous entries, which on the present occasion total nearly a hundred.

Mr. Stephen Graham has taken charge of them, and he selects three poems for especial commendation. They are "Roads from Jericho and Gomorrah", by Dorian Cooke, Staines, Middlesex, "Born Between the Wheels", by Phoebe Hesketh, Bolton, Lancashire, and "The Gathering of the Apples", by Margaret Stanley-Wrench, Selsey, Sussex. In Mr. Graham's judgement the most original of the three is the "polyphonic entertainment", as Mr. Cooke describes it, and although the two other entries are written in a more conventional form they are both attractive enough to merit our congratulations.

ROADS FROM JERICHO AND GOMORRAH

A Polyphonic Entertainment

DORIAN COOKE

With rubble still lying at a long world's ends
From the age and red acre of war and dark
Drowning and drought, there are worlds to be built on the bends
Of back lands; and steel must be rubbed to a spark.
Two handfuls of sand hold the storms of the past;
But the future is blown into sign-grains of dust.

Here is
Only multiple surprise
Thunder opening doors
Like the lids of new-born eyes

There are several ways
Through the maze
Of sealed flats and floors
To a many-made pattern of light

And thunder opening doors
Will shake the astonished sight
Of strangers in fortuitous rooms
Drab refugees from rain
Fatigue or pain

Spitting their blood on library floors
Or fingering the faded blooms
Of hothouse plants in some botanical garden

Eyes once struck will slowly harden
Into the coins that year by year
Endure a general wear and tear
From hand to pocket
Till dust and darkness fill the empty socket

Thunder opening doors
Exposes the bloodstained floors
Between the day and night

There are several ways through
To the old and new
Of a many-made pattern of light

There is no telling of the eyes that will blaze their ways
Through night-long lives, to go on or go under,
As the past pulls down a particular phase
Of one day done between lightning and thunder.
There is no telling of the ways through life-long nights
From thunder to the burning of the many-made lights.

To-day is always a dark of long deaths that persists
To the ultimate earth of a change; here direction
And meaning are no more than maps that may show a few twists
In the road or an unexpected intersection
Of routes. Some parts of the pattern become obsolete
After a day; some will always remain incomplete.

Here is
Only multiple surprise
Thunder closing doors
Like the lids of dying eyes

And strangers scrubbing the locked floors
Scraping the windows in the corridors
Grow old unawares
Shut off from the suck of the iron stairs
That lead down
To a sixpenny town
Of red balloons

And children in prams with sucked tin spoons
In their hands
And deckchairs in a random sprawl
Crowding the seasonable sands
Like rancid drawings on a public wall

(When the thunder fell
On the nine-storied million dollar hotel
It was the first in the catenation of claps
Which by shaking and shattering
All the much-mattering
Architectural niceties of the hotel
Made inevitable its later collapse)

Thunder closing all the doors
Seals off the corridors
That were built to divide
The chance-populated rooms
Of transit homes
From the intricate world outside

There is no telling of the days that the past pulls down
And packs away in bundles, like letters in a box,
— Long winter tales of old lives left filthy and undone
To be blown along the gutters to an equinox.
There is no telling of the lights that would burn again
On a journey back to Sodom and the fortress on the plain.

But the rubble can be told on the blurred roads back
To the wreckage at the end of a world ago:
Such a tale stops short with each word burnt black
Like a blasted paddock where nothing will grow.
Here all the dreams of farms once mother-milk-white
In the noise of summer are sucked out of sound and sight.

And now there's nothing left to say.
The last dark dreams have died away
Like murmurs of obsequial speeches
Lost in the leaves of churchyard beeches.

Many have tried to raise again
In secret forms of sun and rain
The ghosts of medieval gardens
And beggars with their bags of pardons.

A cruciform of light and shade
(The banner of a ninth crusade)
Was carried for a year or two
By men with nothing else to do.

And there were many others here
(Type of the snow-crazed mountaineer)
Who, blinded by the cold, blind sky,
Had nothing left to do but die.

But no one caught the light that fell
On the fields of the grainland swell.
And now there's nothing left to see
On the boughs of the last dark tree.

But dreams of farms with barns full of fat and the cattle-pool
Sweat-warm in a summer of noise are interpreted still:
Cock feathers all the colours of glass, the dazzle of wool
On foaming grass, gold on the corn-shorn slopes of a hill.
And the waking works of fields and flesh, and the seasonal feast
From weathers and wood, still flow to the making of man and beast

Now new visions must come of the manworld's warring
For the beckoning lives of a world or two ahead;
All the colours and sounds that are not worth storing
In a comfortable lodge in the past's prompt bed
Are broken up for scrap with litter out of cages,
Torn music sheets and books with illegible pages.

And this is altogether a different destruction,
— Not the usual depredations of meaning but a kind
Of final disappearance of a persistent obstruction
That has never been there at all. On the roads behind
The recognized landmarks gather speed, and converge and divide
With the width of the track and the backlash of the tide.

Not back there
In the patterns of fingers and eyes
Traced out on the air
At the windows and doors
Are there marks of a magic surprise
Though thunder still lingers
On the arcs of the eyes
And at the cold tips of the fingers

Not back there again
But the other way calls
Conspires and compels
Like a sly campaign
Of rattling plates and kitchen smells

Here is
Not only movement from thunder to thunder
But a complexus of expectance and wonder
As after the restoration of sight
To eyes grown unaccustomed to the rights and wrongs of light

Each footfall on
Is both a world gone
And the calendar to come —
Rome burning like a madman's hair
When the strings of the fiddle were dumb
All days and all suns bear
To the last world's end at the top of the stair.

POEMS OF PLACE: PRIZE AWARD, 1953

To the average poetry lover the term "Poem of Place" must naturally suggest a song of joy: a lyrical expression of a deep emotion experienced by the poet when he beheld his subject. Such a poem to be true to its theme, must immortalize its subject, presenting it as a living picture, vibrant with the emotion that begat it. It does not merely describe in verse something its author has seen.

Many of this year's entries might well be described as versified catalogues of plants and trees, guide book descriptions in rhyme, or even mere parodies of real poems.

The award goes to a poet whose work is different from these. "To Seville, in Siesta", by Carla Lanyon-Lanyon, Farnham, Surrey, has faults — the two final lines are weak, and "shabby grandeur" and "decrepit loveliness" are questioned by the donor of the prize, Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes. But the poem is none the less superior to the other entries, which have been mostly disappointing, "Fountains of Rome", by Elliott Howes, Barton, Cambridge, is commended.

TO SEVILLE, IN SIESTA

CARLA LANYON-LANYON

Quieten your beggars and your bells,
Sleep in your great vibrating heat,
An aggravating castanet
Claps on its fellow, noonday spills
Twelve hard notes where the street narrows,
Led hot notes in the narrow street.

Beautiful city of so many sorrows,
I have been most marvellously at peace
In your decrepit loveliness;
From arch and path, from pool and lawn,
From all your shabby grandeur drawn
A vital joy that shall not cease
And happiness, and happiness.

Quieten the twelve notes of your bell,
The noonday slips to afternoon,
Columbus sleeps and Bequier sleeps,
Pedro the petulant, the cruel;
All sleep in age long summer swoon.
Across the wall a shadow creeps,
A shadow creeps across the wall.

PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT

(New Series, No. 15)

By ALUN LLEWELLYN

What will guide an adjudicator in the choice of a winning poem is a mixture of principle and instinct. He must have certain principles of judgement by which to establish his own canons of taste; but one of these must be the recognition that a great poem will succeed in imposing its own principles even against the critic's own distaste.

A poem is the successful perception of a moment of beauty, successful not only in being perceived but in being sufficiently realized to be communicated. It may be a perception of physical beauty or of some intellectual experience freshly and originally achieved. The greatest poems will fuse the bodily with the mental conception to fire both with the

spirit. And if the poem is to be a genuine work of art it will find in its creation the inevitable shape to make it a living thing. That is, it will impose a form and a rhythm of its own upon the idea and crystallize the moment of beauty into a sculpture which will have whatever permanence can belong to human things.

These are high standards to impose, yet the difference between verse and poetry is that anything which is a poem will have caught in some part this sense of sculpture. Among the entries V. A. Staff's tender "Nativity Scene", S. D. Masters' "Dawn Lily", and E. B. W. Chappelow's "Elegy On A Young Man Dead" were all of high standard and sincerity. Frank Dosseter's "Mountains of Promise" would, but for some occasional infelicities of phrase, have had much higher ranking. H. V. S. Page with his vigorous, rhythmic and well-thought "Challenge of a Northern Poet" got near. And Edith Roseveare's "The Prowler", haunting and effective, needed only to have its emotion crystallized into thought to be successful.

The Award is given to A. E. Dodd whose "Elements" seemed to the adjudicator to combine a sense of form with the sense of mystery and to bring strong feeling sufficiently within intellectual control to create a poem.

ELEMENTS

A. E. DODD

Unseen, the vital air
Soon rusts our iron pride,
And all our care
Is mortified.

Unheard, the gentle rain
Dissolves our painted mask,
To prove how vain
Our stage-play task.

Unfelt, the earth spins on
Impassive to our rage,
Ripe union
Our heritage.

And yet the living fire
Will flame eternally,
One spark inspire
Divinity.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION

There were not many entries for the Epigram Competition. A good opportunity may have been missed by some man or woman of wit. Wit is the important thing, and it is a pity that wit was notably absent from several entries. Brevity is another factor. You cannot have an epigram of twenty lines. A study of Pope is recommended and then the cultivation of thinking in epigrams. A certain facility is required as a preparation for the writing of epigrams. This year we are awarding the first prize to Celia Randall, County Down, Ireland, the second to Agnes M. Hickey, Madison, Connecticut, U.S.A., and the third prize to M. Trench, Bracknell, Berks.

STEPHEN GRAHAM

EPIGRAM

CELIA RANDALL

My work's returned. I look at it with grief,
Frowning at page bethumbed and dog-eared leaf,
Until one whispers: laugh at what you see.
Would not the page uncut more bitter be?

THE MEASURE

AGNES MacCARTHY HICKEY

Sometimes we keep a paradoxical score
In reckoning the life-long deeds of men.
Their many high achievements we ignore,
One human error, we balefully retain.

TRUTH IN HER WELL

M. TRENCH

Forgotten at the bottom of her well
Poor Truth lay drowned;
But Humbug wept while Falsehood rang her knell
When she by Chance was found.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION: 1953

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. to reach here not later than 1st March, 1954. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR POETS
A NEW PRIZE-ANTHOLOGY

The Poetry Society is about to inaugurate a yearly or bi-yearly Anthology of Prize Verse. Poets everywhere are invited to submit a Poem for possible inclusion.

The Editors of the Anthology, whose names will be announced presently, are to judge the quality of the various poems submitted in accordance with the terms of an Alice Hunt Bartlett bequest. The late Mrs. Bartlett, one-time American Editor of *The Poetry Review*, empowered her Executors to arrange for this open Prize Competition for Members of the Society. Rules and instructions will be published in our next issue.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN POETRY AWARD

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to poets in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best poem in English. It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than thirty-two lines. There is no restriction in the choice of subject and poetic form.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. One poem only must be submitted by any one poet, and all entries typewritten. The manuscript must be sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS. can be returned. Closing date for the first year's award is 31st December, 1953.

The outer envelope must be addressed to "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

LILIAN BOWES LYON POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Lilian Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so— and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the second year's award is 30th June, 1954, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Lilian Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

Oriole (The Poets Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5, this year for a ballad, any subject, any length. Competitors are required to adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and also on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address which must accompany every entry. No Competitor may enter more than one poem.

The winning poem will appear in *Poetry Review*. Do not enclose stamps as manuscripts are not returnable. Closing date 31st July, 1953. Address to : Oriole Prize, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st September, 1953.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1953

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fifth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10, which is generously offered each year by the Marquess of Queensbury, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1954. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1953

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1953.

PORTMAN SQUARE—HOMAGE

In the month of March magic came to Portman Square, and we were bathed in more than Oriental splendour. At Easter we blossomed into a Miltonian grove; but these wonders were but a fanfare to the blaze of Coronation. Looking back, in the light of a world reawakened to the glories of heritage in word and symbol, the rededication of the Old to the New and the New to the Old spirit of England, the threadworn acrimonies of Ancient versus Modern in Poetry pale before the epic in which we have been living.

So much for the discussion-period in the review of the Coronation *Poetry Review*. Foremost place in the programme was properly given to Mr. William Kean Seymour's reading of his Sonnet to Her Majesty; a gentle piece, not concerned with pomp but distilling the essence of that tremendous love and pride which all her subjects, in their various ways, have so spontaneously poured out at the feet of their Queen. Miss Odette Tchernine's thoughtful poem, "The Flower", followed and we were glad to hear that a copy of the Coronation *Poetry Review* had been graced by Royal acceptance.

Before the ambitious Coronation series of Readings opened, Mr. Wilton Cole and Mrs. Kathleen Richardson (described unofficially as "a strange marriage") presented Man and Beast: Mr. Cole, at first sight a most unlikely Beast, gave one of his best and characteristically easy-seeming displays of superb technique. Who but he could transfer E. E. Cummings's "Mouse" — a poem for the eye if ever there was one — to a word-image so convincing that our Cat sat on the Mat a few feet away from the Reader all agog for its prey?

Charles Doran's dramatic evenings always draw a full audience. He has at command not only his own great talents but those of about half the B.B.C. His "names" always turn up (not, alas, the rule in one or two other programmes). We admired once again the versatility of that good actor from the "Schools Rep.", Mr. Stanley Mackenzie, in extracts from "The Duchess of Malfi".

Not the least of Mr. Doran's gifts is that of taking over a programme in emergency and giving it his own expert imprint. This he did most successfully in the Ireland programme of the Coronation series. Dr. Leigh Henry, who arranged the series, was supported by Mr. Alun Llewellyn, our Welsh poet, and Miss Lesley Deane; and in Bardic robes, he gave us a brief view of the ancient Gorsedd ceremony, and some insights into Welsh character, poetry and song. Folk songs were delightfully sung in costume by Miss Anita Edwards and penthyllion by a vocal quartet.

For Scotland, Mr. James McKechnie and Miss Kelty MacLeod lived up to their glowing reputation both within the Society and outside it.

William Barnes of Dorset

by GILES DUGDALE

William Barnes was undoubtedly the greatest poet ever to have written in English dialect. A Dorset man who lived his entire life in the country, he has written some of the most beautiful verses in the language, mostly couched in the delightfully slow talk of his own county. This biography deals not only with this side of his gifts, but also with his work as a craftsman, artist, and linguist, and also goes fully into his relationship with Thomas Hardy and his influence on the latter's writing. Mr. Dugdale has given us a most interesting study of this gifted and very English poet.

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Kelty's lyrics, strung like jewels on a lovely voice and the McKechnie-Burns masterpiece, *Tam O'Shanter*, fulfilled Mr. Stephen Graham's prophecy from the chair: "Listen well, for you may hear something that you will remember all your lives."

Canada sadly missed its Robert Service and Paul Lacombe, but gave us youth in Patricia Owens and Arthur Hill. Still to come, at the time of writing, are Australia (poet-in-person Miss Geraldine Kalka-Cash), South Africa (Mr. Roy Campbell) and New Zealand (Miss Lorna Finlayson). It must be noted that the impossibility of putting a girdle round the earth in sixty minutes is apparent to both arrangers and audience; even a comet takes rather longer, and the stars must steer their courses by the clock. Some over-shoot and some must leap over much that is representative, but our minds have been stretched and our affections refreshed for our brother poets of the Commonweal.

It was a happy thought too, that our Poet Kings and Queens should speak through Mr. Doran and Miss Mary Ainsworth during that Royal Week. And some surprisingly good poetry came from the Kings and Queens. Children have been celebrating also. In that unique comradeship in poetry conducted by Dr. Leigh Henry, original poems by "Me" are among the freshest flowers to bloom at Number Thirty-Three. No Little Lord Fauntleroys here, but sturdy poets of surprising vision. Why not gather a posy for our equally unspoiled Royal Children?

K.V.R.

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff.

Canada and America first! It is hardly surprising that many overseas visitors for the Coronation should be members of the Centres across the Atlantic, and they have brought very good news indeed of the way in which The Poetry Society's bright flag has been kept flying all winter.

Therefore it is fitting that we listen at the outset to the reports from Toronto, Nova Scotia, and Boston. The great Canadian city on Lake Ontario to begin with: so right away!

TORONTO (CANADA)

"Culture is 'coming along' over here, although it is somewhat slow progress." Somewhat slow it may be, according to the latest report we have received from Mr. Thomas Ballantyre, a former president of the Toronto Centre — known in the Canadian city as attached to the Pen Guild — but very heartening and enviable.

Of course Mr. Ballantyre's acknowledgement to the poetry-movement in America is handsome. He recalls that the magazine *Life* recently devoted eight pages to the story of Harriet Monroe's monthly, *Poetry*, and that Carl Sandburg, of Swedish decent, was honoured by Sweden for his work in poetry in the U.S.A. These events have had their repercussions in Canada, and the annual contest for the best poem by Toronto members has drawn thirty entries. And the Centre is very gratified by the publication of a member's poem. "Inquietude" in the Jan.-March number of *The Poetry Review*.

GEORGE RONALD

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NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA)

A year of "light and shade" has ended at this Centre. Great sadness was caused by the deaths of two active members, Helen Antonick and Helen Algar. They will be greatly missed.

At the thirteenth annual dinner Dr. A. Stanley Walker, of King's University, spoke amusingly about the sense and sound in English and other languages. Dr. Burros Martin continued his talks on contemporary poetry during the year, bringing in Yeats and Hopkins. As usual the homes of members have been hospitably opened for the monthly meetings, Milton's "Paradise Lost" (Dr. Watson Kirkconnell), "Robinson Jeffers" (Mrs. Doreen Heaps), and "The Mind of a Poet" (Dr. H. L. Stewart) — these also have attracted large audiences at the monthly meetings. As usual the homes of hospitable members have been available for these.

It is pleasant to hear that the second *Chap Book*, volume II of the Nova Scotia Book of Verse, has been a financial success.

BOSTON (U.S.A.)

From Canada to America . . . The twenty-fifth anniversary of the famous Massachusetts Centre of The Poetry Society was held in April — and here, Boston members, is the Message of Friendliness that your Secretary, Miss Blanche T. Bigelow, asked for in a letter received just too late for our response in time. We are indeed grateful for your Celebration-Gift, and the inspiration of which you speak as a debt to us is mutual.

Let us all go forward in 1953 with the devotion so essential at a time in world-history when the things of the mind and spirit — the Beautiful, the Good, the True — are being turned from even by people whose forerunners were deeply moved by such a declaration as that of the title of a once-notable painting, "The Utmost to the Highest".

Since the inception of the Boston Centre monthly meetings have been held, and among the names of visitors who have attended them is that of Laurence Binyon. The Centre's history began through the efforts of some ladies of the time when New England culture was at its height, and orators and clergy were world-famous.

"During the life of the Centre one influence more than any has strengthened it — that of Charles Hammond Gibson, a Vice President of the English Society. Always his house, rich in art treasures and redolent of the great names of those who, during the artistic and historical ages have met there, has been open to us. On his seventieth birthday he spoke, at Emerson College, on his memories of Britain: and then we crossed the street for tea in a mansion that spoke of both Old England and New England."

NORTHERN IRELAND

By way of Ireland we return home. One of the cheering features of the year's work at the Centre in Belfast was that the financial report showed a balance in hand: but more cheering still has been the interest taken by junior members, and much hard labour is being done to extend this side of the Centre's activities.

The monthly programme for the winter and spring has been completed "most successfully", and everyone of its sixty-something members is looking forward to an equally successful time ahead. In February there was an especially interesting evening. "Group Speaking" was the title of it, and three "teams" participated — junior, intermediate, and senior. Miss Helen Waddell and Miss Marjorie Lyon are among the Centre's "patrons", and the honorary secretary is now Miss Hettie Haddock, pressure of home duties having caused the retirement of Mrs. Middleton.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

Is Browning read nowadays? The question has been raised at Walton and Weybridge just lately, for there was an unusually small gathering at the Browning reading in April. Whether Yes or No is the answer, the evening was asked for by three members, and those who attended showed their enjoyment. John Gittens was in the chair, and Brian Squire and Irene Round shared the reading, Mrs. Round giving "How They Brought The Good News to Ghent" in "galloping style, admirably suited to the words".

By contrast a large audience attended Kenneth Lillington's talk on Stephen Spender's poetry. One of the most successful lectures of the season was given by John Lord on William Blake. Mr. Lord has been a life-long student of this great poet and artist, and he dwelt on the wisdom in the writings and emphasized its application to present-day needs. Mrs. Elsie Gittens, the hon. secretary, welcomes enquiries at 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

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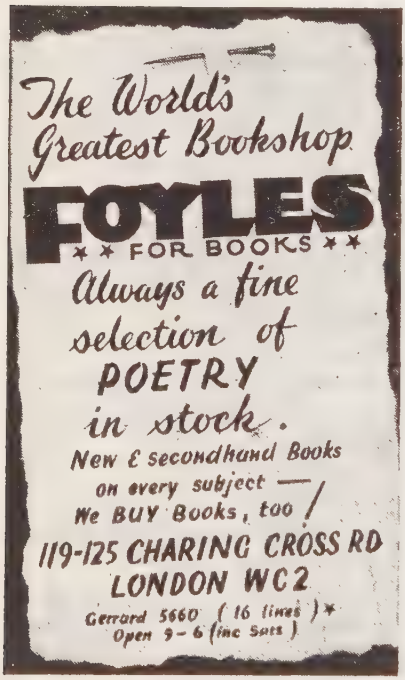
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IPSWICH

If you should chance to be in this charming Suffolk town on the day of the month when the Centre holds its meeting, get into touch with Miss Kay M. Turner, the Honorary Secretary, at 18 Willoughby Road. You will find poetry in the air, and the music of it wherever the members of the Centre may go. For example, in April they hired a coach and journeyed out through a glorious day to the home of their Chairman, Mr. F. H. A. Engleheart, at Stoke Priory, Stoke by Nayland.

Forty members were in the party, and in that lovely place a well-known poet, Mr. R. N. Currey of Colchester, gave an address with a question in the title — "How Modern is Modern Poetry?" A poem of Mr. Currey's, "Two Worlds", had been broadcast in the Third Programme a few months earlier. The members were the guests at tea of Mr. and Mrs. Engleheart, and, Miss Turner informs us, "their four peacocks insisted on joining in the discussion afterwards!"

EALING

"Modern Verse versus Classical Verse." With such a title and subject for the April meeting this always interesting Centre gave a lead to the Centres in other parts of the country, for at the present time there can be few subjects as important for people deeply concerned with poetry to discuss.

Other subjects at the monthly meeting, held on the first Tuesday at Greystokes, Queen's Parade, Ealing (Miss Janice Booker), have an inexhaustible interest — and sometimes fascination — of their own. An instance is one entitled "Poems of Madness". We hasten to testify, though, that this does not indicate any drift by the Centre away from sanity.

GUILDFORD

This busy Centre in Surrey congratulates Miss Roberta Shuttleworth on the acceptance by Her Majesty the Queen of two of her poems, "A High-Summer Day's Dream" and "To the All-Inclusive Majesty of the Anointed Queen". So do the Editorial Staff.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL, AND DISTRICT

A happy send off was given to this newly inaugurated Centre on the last Saturday in April. The first meeting was held at "Belclare", Old Town, Bexhill, and all in these seaside towns who are interested in poetry will be welcomed at the same address any final Saturday in the month.

Major E. H. F. Morris was elected Chairman, and the honorary secretary and treasurer respectively are I. K. Bateman and R. A. Wharton. Now, you South-coasters, don't forget that headquarters is always ready to arrange for you a top-class lecture by one of its voluntary lecturers!

STROUD

The members of this go-ahead Gloucestershire Centre are looking forward to a visit from Sir Eugen Millington-Drake and the President to one of their meetings during the autumn. Sir Eugen's engagements abroad, and Mr. Thomas Moult's heavy commitments at home, have made it impossible to arrange for their appearance on the lecture-platform any earlier.

Miss Mary Martyn is the honorary secretary of the Centre, and she welcomes enquiries at Sunfold, Rodborough Common, near Stroud.

LEICESTER

"Thank you for the charming and scholarly way in which you have addressed us." By acclamation the first meeting of the Leicester Centre approved these sincerely-spoken words by the County Director of Education, Mr. Stewart C. Mason, M.A., to our colleague on the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*, Mr. Kennedy Williamson.

Mr. Williamson's lecture on "The Epithet in Poetry" had delighted an audience so large that the meeting was transferred from one of the class-rooms of Vaughan College to the Assembly Hall. Among the poets from whom he quoted in illustrating his themes were Homer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Francis Thompson, Thomas Hardy, Kipling, Rupert Brooke, Walter de la Mare, and Edith Sitwell. What richness!

The convenor of the meeting was Mr. A. G. Richards, and he is to be congratulated on the Centre's happy send-off. His address for enquiries is 45 Swainson Road, Leicester. We trust that his preliminary endeavours are having such an unexpected reward that he will soon change his mind somewhat, even about what he said at the beginning of the year: "Urban culture is spread in such queer patches, and rural culture is very thin."

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11.	Arthur Vivian	Horatian Night Piece
12.	Arthur Vivian	Hope, Death and Immortality
13.	Terence Heywood	Winter Jasmine
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The Gen. Sec., The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

BRONDESBURY:—Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address — Telephone: WIL 6405.

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BURGESS HILL:—Meetings second Saturday in each month at Mrs. Lambert's restaurant, 45 Church Road. All enquiries to Miss K. G. Boycott, "Twemlow", Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (Affiliated to The Poetry Society):—Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A.

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GUILDFORD:—Mrs. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford, Surrey.

HAMPSTEAD:—Meetings on first and third Fridays, 8–9.30 p.m., at 14 Eldon Grove, by invitation of Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins.

KENSINGTON:—Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

MANCHESTER:—Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester 13. Meetings at Fearnley House, 3 St. Ann's Churchyard, Manchester, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries should be sent to Mrs. W. M. Riley, 20 Medina Drive, Tollerton, Nottingham.

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SHEFFIELD:—Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

INVITATION

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

ORIOLE POETS GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey — Leigh Henry.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s.

The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

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TO WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

1. All MSS must have the name and the address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. One side only of the paper must be used.
3. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
4. A stamped and self-addressed envelope must always be enclosed. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
5. In their own interest writers should notice that poems over thirty lines in length have a very doubtful chance of acceptance.
6. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
7. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least a month has elapsed. A decision may take longer.
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"Earth's the right place for love"

Prelude . . .

GLORIOUS APOLLO

It is a consoling thought — that although thousands and tens of thousands of good people have not read a single line of any poem all summer they have taken delight in poetry none the less: the poetry of Movement. At one time in August the whole of Britain, even to the far North of Scotland, looked on, in actuality or imagination, at a cricket match, and nobody will deny that beauty of action in a golden, green, and white setting contributes much to the popular enjoyment of the game about which Francis Thompson wrote immortal verse.

A poem about a poem? Such a literary achievement is possible, with due respect to the critic who has been questioning the poet's right to make poetry out of a hawthorn tree, which, he claimed, is itself a poem. Anyway, the reader who has drawn our attention to a leading publisher's letter informing him that the firm no longer publishes books of verse may take heart. The great British race will never be without Apollo as long as there is cricket.

* * *

Signs of change on the Poetry Front may be discerned by students who take careful note of contemporary criticism — change of mood, change of tendency even, and a reviewer of C. Day Lewis's latest book in *The Times Literary Supplement* speaks of, and seems to regret, the idiom in the verse of poets of Mr. Day Lewis's generation: "the long line in common speech that runs away with itself, a too-fluid stream of weakly rhythmic conversation, where the word-order gives the minimum rather than the maximum value to each word: an analytic treatment of the subject without the opportunity, as in Proust, of creating the subject through exhaustive analysis — but we do not know that this idiom is poetry.

"The more we see of it the more we suspect it." Where we no longer find "a unity of inspiration" among present day poets, the critic continues, we have a technique that has "lost connexion with the miracle of its possibility, that has lost awe and fear and love." In a later article, on the American poet, Mr. Wallace Stevens, the same journal defines poetry as "a magnificent and holy thing: like beauty, which is also a reflection of

God, it demands reverence." Finally, concerning this reverence: "That to-day poetry so rarely receives reverence or receives the wrong kind, is sufficient commentary on the unnatural state of our society."

These examples are by no means isolated, although *The Times Literary Supplement* never fails to speak with representative authority. *The Listener* has been truly scathing of late — indeed yes, even though it persists in printing verse contributions which, if in certain instances the reader asked what they meant, would be bound to draw from their authors the same sort of answer that Browning is reputed to have given to an inquirer about the meaning of "Sordello".

* * *

The work of Robert Frost is by no means so widely known in England as it should be, although he has for long commanded the respect of his fellow-poets. "It is time we did him what honour we can." So Mr. Day Lewis has written, and The Poetry Society is able to offer tribute to Mr. Frost through the feature with which it is our privilege to open each number of *The Poetry Review* — the dedication to a poet of the English-speaking countries whose life, devoted to his art, has gained him high distinction.

The essential characteristic of Frost's writing has been well emphasized by a eulogist in his own country, Mr. Paul Engle — "an easy, loose way of saying everything that sustains equally American humour and American poetry. It is part of the native genius of Robert Frost that he has caught this colloquial rhythm . . . He knows that 'all the fun's in how you say a thing.' "

Robert Frost's books are published in England by Jonathan Cape.

* * *

It is from America that *The Poetry Review* — and indirectly The Poetry Society — has received and appreciated the following testimonial.

"Reading *The Poetry Review* was most enlightening. It showed how closely knit the poets are in England, through their locals and common meeting-grounds. In America poets are isolated from each other, unless they are in a vanguard or a coterie."

Strange, that about the same time as this expression of belief in the comradeship and sociability of poets over here was mailed to us from across the Atlantic a leading English poet conveyed in a letter to one of the Editorial Board his melancholy belief that "poets are not gregarious, never were, and never will be".

Our reply was a recommendation that he should join The Poetry Society and see for himself what jolly companions they can be!

* * *

How a poet writes his poems. Always this is a fascinating byway of inquiry for the student of literature to wander along, and one of the most enlightening pages about the poet's method is to be found in a recently

published book entitled *W. B. Yeats: Letters to Katharine Tynan,* which is published by the Dublin house of Clonmore and Reynolds (18s.).

In his young manhood Yeats copied out and posted to Miss Tynan "two verses I made the other day." The first reads:

I will arise and go now and go to the island of Innisfree
And live in a dwelling of wattles, of woven wattles and woodwork made,
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a yellow hive for the honey-bee
And this old care shall fade.

Writers of verse who believe that the first version of something they compose ought to be the final one, and that any revision would mar its spontaneity, might usefully be reminded that not a single line of Yeats's famous poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," remained as it was originally.

Ireland's greatest poet did not find it easy to make a living. But he spoke brave words in those early letters.

"I am no idle poetaster," he declared at the age of twenty-three. "My life has been in my poems. To make them I have broken my life in a mortar, as it were . . . I have seen others enjoying, while I stood alone with myself — commenting, commenting — a mere dead mirror on which things reflect themselves. I have buried my youth and raised over it a cairn — of clouds. Some day I shall be articulate, perhaps."

* * *

In the years immediately before and after the first World War the name of Hilaire Belloc was a household familiar, especially if it was mentioned along with G. K. Chesterton's. Now that Belloc has joined the good companions in English poetry who have gone from us it is startling to recall what a host of poets were no less renowned — some, of course, more greatly renowned — thirty or forty years ago.

Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, W. H. Davies, "A.E." Henry Newbolt, James Stephens, Lascelles Abercrombie, William Watson, Lord Alfred Douglas, John Davidson, Ralph Hodgson, D. H. Lawrence, John Drinkwater, Robert Bridges, Herbert Trench, Laurence Binyon, Robert Nichols, James Elroy Flecker . . .

The list might be extended to include poets of distinction who were then in their prime — or time of high promise — and are still living and working. Walter de la Mare is one of these, and there are John Masefield, Wilfried Wilson Gibson, Alfred Noyes, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, Edith Sitwell, Siegfried Sassoon . . . The catalogue is not complete, but a magazine has limits.

* * *

Postscripts. — Two of our recent contributors, Dorothy Una Ratcliffe and Barbara de Seysell, were among the poets whose work was selected for inclusion in Richard Church's monthly Poetry Page (August) in *John O'London's Weekly* . . . We welcome F. L. Lucas as a contributor. His new volume, *From Many Times and Lands*, will be reviewed in our next issue.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD.

DOOM AND THE POET*

(November 17, 1820)

F. L. LUCAS

"*I hate the world; it batters too much the wings of my self-will.*"—JOHN KEATS.

As some waste sea heaves onward without sound,
  Rolls the Campagna, till its eastward sweep
Breaks on the Apennine. Beneath it drowned
  Lie ancient wrecks of cities — save some heap
Of uptossed stone, some squalid hut, some mound
  Where the gaunt shepherd sprawls among his sheep;
Cities whose names were once a battlecry —
Fidēnae, Crustumerium, Gabii,

Lanuvium, Laurentum, Labicum,
  Bovillae, Ardea — they all are dead.
Ruined aqueducts, where now no waters come
  Like shattered spines of monsters lie outspread;
A spectre to the northward, white and dumb
  With the first snow, Soracte lifts its head;
Low in the distance, where there yet stands Rome,
A misty bubble swells — Saint Peter's Dome.

Only the blithe birds pipe their happiness
  In the pale azure of November skies,
Forgetting kestrel's claw and winter's stress,
  Ecstatic in the moment's Paradise.
Yet one stout figure waits there, motionless,
  Clad in a crimson cloak — his small, dark eyes
Well-satisfied with all that they survey,
As the good God upon the Seventh Day.

Close at his call, two liveried lackeys stand.
  One plants in earth a staff, where by its chain
Flutters an owl; and on its breast his hand
  Fastens a mirror, flashing back again
The low sunlight across that lonely land
  Each time the captive whirls its wings in vain,
Blinking and blinded in the hateful sun.
Behind, the second henchman loads a gun.

* See, for this strange episode, William Sharp's *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, p. 64

The larks that run amid the withered grass,
  The thrush that perches on the dark stone-pine,
See yon mysterious glitter of the glass,
  Yon strange, bewitching glamour of sunshine —
And then the helpless owl! They wheel and pass,
  Screaming at that old foe of all their line.
Then smiles the plump cheek of the Cardinal,
Nestling his gunstock — and his victims fall.

The dead are gathered. Then another flight
  Swoops on the owl, wild-whirring. And again
Flutter the feathers down from Heaven's height
  (Subtle is Mother Church) like angels slain.
But now this Nimrod pauses. For in sight
  A carriage draws across the dusty plain
With two white horses, stumbling in their stride —
Such bony ribs as Death himself might ride.

Within, a heap of the year's last flowers lies,
  As if some corpse passed to its resting-place.
And yet no dead are here — in still surprise
  Two strangers watch the Cardinal at his chase.
But one is spectre-thin, with haggard eyes,
  And listless lips — and white as wax his face.
The massacre proceeds. No more to see.
Too fit this emblem of Fate's irony.

Yes, this is Life. The mirror that man's mind
  Holds up to catch Beauty and Truth is there.
There sits the Owl, pontifical and blind,
  Of human Judgement — talons quick to tear.
There bleed the sweet-voiced songsters born to find
  A moment's ecstasy — and then despair.
There stands the blood-red Deity of Doom,
Lord of Illusion, Giver of the Tomb.

The driver cracks his whip. In limping trot
  His hacks strain at their traces, mid the play
Of the last gnats of autumn. On tombs forgot
  The dust of man's brief passage settles grey.
Slowly the carriage dwindles to a dot
  Where, up the whiteness of the Appian Way,
Like clouds, in silence brood the black pinetrees,
Like smoke, towards Heaven gloom the cypresses.

MORE THAN HE KNOWS

N. K. CRUICKSHANK

Who plants trees on a hill where there were none
Takes space and binds it into comely sheaves,
And gales of wind and crumbles them like bread;

Takes the pale evening light like yellow hair,
Inserting there long delicate dark fingers;

Echoes that far-off Eden act of God
Who brooded on a naked rib until
It flowered with depth, soft ingrown mysteries;

Constructs a bed for babes, hide-out for robbers,
Dance-floor for midges, concert-hall for birds;

Plants weariness in the strong swinging arm,
And in the breasts of creatures now unborn
Fears, old as life, of being lost or found.

WICKLOW

DOREEN DUNLOP

Through the slow summer, and the days of pain,
The stoic pines have guarded me from change;
Trembled in patience of the valiant sun;
Or bowed themselves in silver veils of rain;
Surging in ocean murmurs, range on range,
Over green caverns where the goldcrests run.
And now the daily circle of the light
Shrinks from Time's fingers to the sheltering dark;
Beech trees and birch are fretted green and gold;
The plumed wrens take far courageous flight;
Only the unfaltering pine trees wear no mark
Of winter's triumph, or the threatening cold.
Could I such patience win, I too might go
Radiant in winter, garlanded with snow.

GARDEN POEM

WREY GARDINER

In the lost green world of the forgotten rose
There is no anguish of the unfulfilled dream,
No torture of the real thorn
Of a wrong life.

Here only the word peace is made light and colour
Against the dark green shadows of leaves
That block the glare of the unpitying sun
And drown the vision in an antique stare.

Where time is caught up into the throat of tears
And memory is hushed into the dim hour
When the ruin of life grins
In the patchwork pattern on the weed-grown ground.

SELF

A. H. HEYS

You cannot escape your Self;
He will meet you in the end;
Though you swear you do not know him,
He will seem your closest friend.

If you mock him, he will mock you,
If you curse him, he will curse,
If you bribe him with your money,
He will slip it in your purse.

If you look long in your mirror
He will meet you, eye to eye,
If in your rage you choke him
Then you yourself must die.

He reads the secret signpost
And turns the hidden bend;
You cannot escape your Self —
He will meet you in the end.

JOY

(Forty-seventh Psalm)

TERESA HOOLEY

God is gone up with a merry noise:
An exaltation of larks,
Shaking the shining sky with viewless singing.
A murmuration of starlings —
Castanet and cymbal,
Rising as one bird from the russet branches of the flowering elm.
A skein of geese
Honking their arrowy flight across frozen flats,
An audacity of sparrows
Comradely chirruping around and about London chimney-pots.

God is gone up with a merry noise,
And the Lord with the sound of the trump.

AUTUMN PASSION

ESTHER SPENCER

Slow dies the light; safely and softly comes night,
But warm lives the peace of the blood.
Gentle the moan of the wind on the stone,
And warm is the blood.

Silver the gleam of the pool in the pine-peopled cool,
But warm lives the beat of the blood.
Sharp sounds the shout on the air; silent the stair,
But warm is the blood.

O, I am rich, my boy; full wise and rich,
And warm lives the beat of my blood.
Dies now the sun on the heath; grief is at peace,
And warm is the blood.

Golden my glowing boy; fey by the fire in the dark.
Warm lives the beat of my blood.
Deep my maturity; peace is the sleep at the end —
Still warm is the blood.

Beating the heat of a heart that was hurt and now still is the will
and easeful the peace of my blood.

THE ENDLESS CHAIN

G. W. HARRIS

As gulls will float in air and swallow all
That from most diverse sources seems to fall,
So men believe whatever they are told
By men as ignorant but far more bold.

Words govern men, as Rivarol once said,
New hopes replace beliefs to fashion dead;
Men's minds, like buckets on an endless chain,
Are filled with error, emptied, filled again.

BEFORE SLEEPING

SONIA BENTZON

Along the evening streets the blue veils drift,
Softening the pavements with a smoky bloom.

This old house wears the twilight like a robe,
The lighted room assumes a simple grace.
A wooden table and a coloured cloth
Spread for the child's last meal with bowls and cups
Of white and blue; a battered Golliwog
With wide clown grin, bestrides the little chair;
A bright book lies upon the woollen rug.

She bends her head above the tablecloth,
Heavy with drowsiness — head of a rose
Upon a sweet neck stem.

Across the window space the mother moves,
With brooding, dedicated face waiting upon her child;
Pouring the milk, spreading the bread with honey,
Making a sacrament of supper-time.

Throughout the earth when evening is here
The little ones are fed and put to bed.
There they will lie curled up in petalled rest,
The pink, gold, dusky innocent flower-faces
And flower-bodies cuddled into sleep.

EAST WIND

FREDA C. BOND

And is this landscape, stretching grey and bare,
The selfsame fields and woods that yesterday
Held spring at the enchanted moment where
The blackthorn breaks into her cloudy spray?

Held spring, as if the enchanter's wand would hold
The moment crystallized for ever, nor
Should ever the silver tarnish or the gold
Grow dim upon the meadow's shining floor.

The grey wind from the east has overthrown
The towers of faery and left behind
A cardboard landscape; the east wind has shown
How fleet is loveliness, how hard to find —

Where is that beauty fled, that does not lie
Or in itself, or the beholding eye?

A CURMUDGEON'S COUNSEL

(Automedon, 1st century B.C. Greek Anthology XI, 50)

DENIS TURNER

That man may lead a happy life
Who owes no debts and has no wife
Or child. If mad enough to wed,
It may be when his wife is dead
He will know happiness, — the more
If she has left him ample store.
Be wise therefore, — but not employed
On things like Atoms or The Void;
Such studies can no peace ensure us,
So leave all that to Epicurus,
And if on me you place reliance
You'll shun both Womankind and Science.

"BINNET'S VISION"

By STUART HOLROYD

Many of you have already met Alfred Binnet, so we need waste no time over introductions. For the benefit of the unfortunate few who have not yet made his acquaintance it will be sufficient for me to say that until several months ago he did not exist. He is indebted for his present existence to Lord Dunsany, the man who summoned him from the void of Characters Unrealised and afforded him a local habitation and a name.*

But, as any author will testify, fictitious characters have a disconcerting proclivity to assert their individuality, and though he may be held responsible for the fact that they exist, it is grossly unjust to blame any writer for the subsequent actions of his creations.

Having, I hope, freed his lordship from all responsibility for the intellectual development of Alfred Binnet, I will continue with my narrative.

Alfred, you will remember, when he was first hatched inherited his progenitor's antipathy towards the modern poets. But from his earliest days he showed an eagerness to learn and understand, and this involved him in activities which his lordship would have considered outrageous — if he had heard about them. Less than a fortnight after his first incoherent gurgle disturbed the peaceful Irish air he began to read and admire Pornick, and even in the work of the lesser Pornicks of the world he detected graces and virtues which gave him an inestimable pleasure. On his bookshelf his first acquisition (that treasured copy of the *Odes of Keats*) and his latest (the collected works of a very controversial modern poet called Grumbledig) stood side by side with such apparent naturalness that one would never guess that they were irreparably alienated by a great disparity of opinion. Above the shelf which they both occupied Binnet had neatly printed the word "Poetry" and there was not in the demeanour of either book a hint that it considered its neighbour unworthy of this name.

Binnet had never ceased to delight in Keats, but he explained to me over coffee one evening that he now devoted most of his time to reading Pornick, Grumbledig, and other contemporaries: "because, you see, although Keats has in great measure the gift to delight and enchant, he hasn't the sense of the present, the awareness of reality that make Pornick and Grumbledig great and important poets".

The café in which we were sitting was not very congenial to intellectual discussion. It was noisy and people were constantly coming and going. However, I could not allow Binnet's assertion to pass unchallenged.

"But surely", I said, "that sense of the present — of *our* present — is

*See "The Awakening" by Lord Dunsany, p. 375, July-Sept. issue.

the quality that makes their poetry volatile and transient? Keats is still read to-day because he didn't allow his sense of the present to cloud his sense of what is eternally and immutably beautiful."

Binnet regarded me with a look which combined amusement with infinite patience.

"You make the mistake of thinking that poetry is simply a matter of words," he said. "It isn't just 'the right words in the right order' as somebody once wrote. That's an ignoble conception of the poet's task; it gives the impression that he is merely an assembler of verbal jig-saw puzzles. No, the only legitimate language for poetry is the language of feeling and the finest poetry is that in which an emotion is expressed as simply as its nature will allow."

"If you treat that idea logically," I retorted, "the greatest poem in the world is the simple statement 'I love' or 'I am sad'."

"Not at all," said Binnet, "because that statement tells us nothing about how you love or in what way you are sad. You see, all experiences are a complex of emotions; when you say you love, the love which you feel may be mixed with compassion, with desire, even with a bitterness amounting almost to hatred, and it is from this conflict of emotions that much modern poetry is born. That's what gives it its restless energy and leads it into obscure paths which can only be explored with obscure language. The poets of the ninteenth century thought that it was sufficient for them to take the first person singular of the verb 'to love' and embroider it with a lot of artificial imagery. But modern poets realise that there are special and individual conditions pertaining to every experience of love. Their poems are complex because they are honest representations of the complexity of emotions which constitute an experience."

This argument was so new to me that I could not spontaneously oppose it or venture any kind of reply. Instead I voiced the question which had been on my mind since the beginning of our conversation.

"How is it," I said, "that you, Alfred Binnet, who two months ago were so conservative in your attitude towards poetry, should have waxed so eloquent in the defence of those whom you would formerly have considered to be incomprehensible and pretentious *poseurs*? What has effected this sudden change?"

"I had a vision" replied Binnet simply.

I waited for him to continue. He swallowed the remainder of his coffee before doing so.

"I call it a vision because it was something more than an ordinary dream. It was an experience — a real and vital experience which altered my whole life.

"It happened like this: a couple of months ago I was sitting up late one night struggling with the obscurities of one of the most applauded of our contemporary poets. Somehow my attention was drawn away from

the book and I experienced the strangest sensation I've ever known. I seemed to step outside the bounds of space and time into a wild and silent place. The stillness was uncanny; there was no perceptible movement either of earth or air. I was only aware of infinity all around me. Then, when my eyes became accustomed to the darkness I witnessed a sight which no human imagination could envisage: I saw the whirling solar system and all the familiar planets — the Earth with her attendant Moon, ringed Saturn, Mars, Venus — chasing each other through space. And all the time I was apart, a non-participating onlooker, silent and alone at the still centre of the universe.

"Then the whole scene suddenly changed. And how bathetically! The whirling stars resolved themselves into the shapes of motor cars and I was once again involved in the mundane struggle for existence. I saw myself, hectic and gesticulating, standing upon a small island around which an interminable stream of traffic was travelling. But when I looked more closely I realised that the man who I thought was myself was quite different from me both in build and in facial appearance; so different, in fact, that I could not understand how I had made the mistake. However, I could not help thinking there must be some sort of mystical relationship between us, for I could feel very poignantly the mental anguish which the stranger suffered. He waved at the passing stream of vehicles, he shouted something to the drivers, he stepped off the pavement but had to leap back quickly in order to avoid being run over. But the grim faces of the drivers, intent on their own business, stared ahead and did not notice the figure of the solitary man who was trying so desperately to communicate with them. It seemed that I was the only person in the world, beside himself, who was aware of his existence and understood his suffering."

Binnet paused for a moment; his eyes lost their far-away look and regarded me candidly.

"That's all," he announced simply, "after that I returned to my normal state of consciousness and continued to read my book. I might have thought no more of the incident, might have just dismissed it as a meaningless dream, had I not happened to turn to the wrong page in my book and read two simple lines which impressed me strangely.

"You probably know the lines I mean, they're from 'East Coker':

> The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
> Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

"Somehow those two lines acted as a sort of catalyst upon my recent dream. They made coherent that which had been meaningless and illuminated a boundless prospect before me. My mind became instantly clear, I felt that nothing was beyond my comprehension, not even the obscurities of modern poety. In this moment of insight I saw deep into the heart of the contemporary artist and experienced the turmoil which

raged there, the eternal struggle between his natural craving for self-expression and the frustrating influences of society.

"I realised then that my dream was not so meaningless as it had at first appeared. Admittedly, I could only read an allegorical meaning into it, but the analogy was so consistent that I could not easily believe that it was entirely coincidental.

"It occurred to me that the two persons I had dreamed of were incarnations of the poet. The first was the poet as he eternally and immortally is: subject to no laws, not even those of time, and so catholic in his sympathies that he can stand at a distance, as it were, and embrace the whole universe with his imagination.

"The second was a picture of the poet as he is to-day: a solitary figure bravely trying to command attention and to make his voice heard above the hubbub of everyday traffic; a man with a soul aching to express itself and to voice a message which is so urgent and so individual that the conventional language of previous poets is not an adequate vehicle for its expression. It is a pityful spectacle to see a sensitive soul stranded, cut off from the society in which it is forced to exist by a barrier of carelessness and insensitivity which that society has itself erected.

"All this I realised in a moment and I knew it was the knowledge I had been seeking, the knowledge which was the key, so to speak, to modern poetry. 'How stupid I was,' I said to myself, 'not to have realised before that I could only arrive at understanding through sympathy. How stupid I was to judge poetry by abstract standards without taking into consideration the conditions which gave it birth.' But I learnt my lesson, I knew what to do in future. From that day I resolved to approach each new work with humility, for only through humility, through complete suppression of prejudice, could I hope to arrive at understanding."

I have not met Binnet since that evening in the crowded café and I have completely lost track of him for he did not tell me his address. However, I think it is quite likely that he will read these pages, so I will take this opportunity to thank him again for a very interesting and illuminating evening.

TREVOR RAMSEY VILLIERS BLAKEMORE

Tribute to the late Trevor Blakemore was paid at the Memorial Service in London by Stephen Graham of the Editorial Board, *The Poetry Review*. William Kean Seymour and Galloway Kyle have also given expression to the personal loss in literary circles of this poet who was a member of The Poetry Society.

Trevor Blakemore was the author of *Poems and Ballads, Through a Glass Darkly, China Clay, Sunrise,* and other books. He was an enthusiastic traveller and in *The Times* Mr. Seymour wrote of his popularity among men of letters.

CARD GAME

P. D. CUMMINS

Shuffle and cut, you players in the game;
The dealer will outwit you just the same,
And flip you from his mad, two-suited pack
Clubs that have turned to red and hearts to black.

THE PRISONER

P. D. CUMMINS

Guilty, they said, thrusting him into the cell,
Condemned to death, they said, turning the key,
The black flag will be hoisted high on the citadel
To-morrow at eight, they said, or else maybe
The following morning . . . but day succeeded day,
No planks were sawn, the axes lost their edge,
The spear buckled, the nails rusted away,
The thorns grew blunt in the hedge.
The jailer moved clockwise, blank and circumspect,
Rounding the icy corridors of stone,
And the prisoner rotted in that house of neglect
Which even the rats disown.
Night succeeded night, and the indifference
Constricted the walls about him, thickened the air,
Till, at the last, his very innocence
Was the guilt he could not bear.

CONDENSATION TRAILS

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

Some find them beautiful — not I —
Those jet-trails pencilling the sky,
Praise the slow ciphers that they write
In pluming, hanging, thinning white
Over the deepened blue. To me,
These chalk that last serenity
With slogans daubing what but war? —
Wreathe the old portents ringed before
High in the zenith of our fear.
There is no playing purpose here,
Nor peaceful use. And the thin scream
Warns, where men once looked up to dream.

THE GATHERING OF THE APPLE

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH

Taut, cool, firm as the cheek of a child
The apple fitted my hand, complete and wholesome,
Golden as autumn's core, and streaked with a sunset
Stain of crimson. And the crisp scent of it,
Bruised sweetbriar, lees of honey, grain of a rose,
Lingered. The knife blade focused the sun for a moment,
Mirrored the blue September sky, the fruit
Was slit, and the brown seeds in their kid-skin shells
Lay like negro babies on a white bed.
What lurked in the husk? A tree coiled like a spring,
Mousetail root, and all the summer's leaves,
And the autumn fruit bending the branch with gold
In two lobes linked like hands joining in prayer?
More than this. Considering, I saw the beginnings,
And the primeval choice. Fresh as an apple
We see it still — into each hand it fits.
Eat it, or throw it down — no power can join
A fruit once gathered to the tree's living stem.
Actions are for eternity, and words
That burn the air cannot be coiled back
Like the moth's harmless tongue from the moon-white flower.
Nothing can join the lobes of my apple again.
Yet the seed can be sown, and the crisp flesh, as I bite it,
Becomes myself. A miracle, unheeded.
Over me burns the bright illusion of blue
That is the sky; under me swings the earth
Unfelt. The sun obliterates the stars,
Yet they burn still, patiently waiting the night,
Like the grey stock, flower of humility,
Unseen by day. How unreal is the world
I have built to move in, how narrow is the orbit
I trace, a track of bruised grass in a garden,
And my mark an apple's core, which the air mawses
To brown. A moment, and I have eaten a century!
Far back, a wand, a sapling sprung from a seed,
And seven clenched buds, like rosy knuckles of children
Opened to flowers, diadems hedged by shells.
By chance or choice, the drift of pollen, the blundering
Knop-bodied bee, or sapphire-sharded fly
Sealed them; seven apples set. Through some the weevil

Or the quilted grub moved secretly, the stain
Of scab flaked like a scar on the golden skin.
But one remained, whole, perfect, the sum of summer
In a fruit, mellow as the acres shorn of harvest
Across which the warm, late sunlight spreads and lies
Like bloom on ripe peach or the nectarine.
King of the stock, the master-cut, the matrix,
Printing itself on time — and yet, beyond it
To the beginnings, a line of dark trees stretching —
And handing on, through sap and fruit and seed
White flesh, sharp juice, joy of the tongue's delight,
As in me move my ancestors, rejoicing
In the smooth sunlight like a skin on my hand,
A line of men standing like shadows over time.
Yet did chance only set them? Is time a map
Through which one track runs clearly? I can retrace
My life like the chart of a country. Here the aimless
River loops through the green fields to the sea,
And this place, masked by trees that scrawl black branches
Like signatures over the sky, is marked and contoured
As a bare hill, topped only by the heavens.
History is only the larger chart,
All there is traced by God whose warm hand touches
Our small lives also. See, even the spider
Whose throbbing web is like a nerve of crystal
From branch to branch, even she is a speck of God,
And set by Him to do His will. O distant
And unseen stars, O fruit, cool-cheeked as a child,
O being least understood, myself, in the garden,
Joined in one act of praise, you are the channel
Through which He moves, you are His creation.
Now in the hour of loss, relinquishment,
When all of the self, all of reality
Dies back in awe and love, when all of being
Sinks in surrender to what, unseen, unheard,
Or dimly as a wind's breath moves through thought,
All is made perfect, wholesome. Loosed from its branch
The apple lies in my hand, golden and burning.
The stars, drained of their light, ebb on the calm
Breast of the sky, like shells awaiting the tide's
Slow throb across the sand. And I, in quietness,
Sense the dark silence, peace beyond understanding,
Eternal compassion, to which all else is shadow,
And shrink in awe and worship, humble as a snail,

That trembles in the brown twilight of the shell.
Then yield at last to live through what seems death.

Only the fruit which clings to the leafless tree
Dies, wrinkled and soured by the white pinch of frost,
Falling to rot, self-whole and self-possessed,
With the dark seed that marks it still unsown.

LINES FROM CATULLUS

"Rura colit nemo, mollescunt colla iuvencis"

FRANK LISSAUER

No hand to till the fields, the bullocks' necks
grow soft in idleness; and undisturbed
in opulent profusion on the ground
the vine-boughs trail. Half-finished furrows fail,
and oxen graze, surprised and half afraid:
where is the busy hook that pruned the trees
who now spread denser shadows than the night?
Ah, scaly rust devours hook and plow
forgotten, man-forsaken where they fell.
For Peleus' palace, room after splendid room
glows everywhere with glittering gold and silver.
See the white ivory on many thrones;
see goblets set on tables, throwing each
to each gay messages of sparkling light.
This house rejoices, all the regal treasure
displayed with wit, in ample splendour laid.
But in the midst of Peleus' proud abode
the couch is placed, as altar to the gods
whose sacred care is marriage, proudly formed
of distant India's wealth of ivory,
and polished like a mirror for a queen.
Its costly linen shows a shell-fish stain
of subtle rose, plundered from Neptune's store.
This coverlet — I hesitate to spoil —
is wrought, is broidered with the lifelike scenes
of ancient men, and feats of heroes told.

I BANDERILLAS DE FUEGO!

By ROY CAMPBELL

The latest translation from the Spanish of Garcia Lorca in an English edition has been published at half-a-guinea by Heinemann. The title is *Lament for the Death of a Bull Fighter, and other Poems,* and the translator, Mr. A. L. Lloyd. I propose to begin my examination of this book by taking a typical example of Lorca's at random:—

El dia se va despacio	The day walks slowly away,
la tarde colgada de un hombro	the evening slung from one shoulder,
dando una larga torera	giving a "long" bullfighting pass
sobre el mar y los arroyos.	over the sea and the streams.

Here Lorca is obviously describing a pass known as the "larga por alto", one of the most sensational passes of the cape in tauromachy. The word *larga* means "long". It refers to any one-handed pass of the cape which extends the latter to its *full length.* The "larga por alto" or the Cordobese pass is the only "larga" which ends with the cape falling over the back of the shoulder as the torero walks slowly away from the bull. The noun "larga" is probably omitted from the Anglo-Spanish dictionary just as the cricketing noun "wide", similarly derived from an adjective, is probably omitted also. Lorca makes a slight technical error in the use of the present participle "dando" (giving). "Rematando" (finishing off), though not for scansion, would be the best word since the pass has already been *given* when the cape floats over the right shoulder and the torero begins to walk away.

The noble arc of this pass (immortalized by Lagartijo in the seventies) is intended by Lorca to represent the solar arc of the light of a whole day, passing over the sea which is in the east and the land in the west: commencing with the crimson of the aurora (that is the red lining of the cape) and terminating with the gold of the evening as the golden outer facing of the cape falls trailing over the shoulder of the torero, who then walks slowly straight away from the bull. The groping and bat-like vision of Mr. Lloyd shrinks, as if dazzled and insulted, from the gold and crimson glories evoked in this magnificent solar image of Lorca's. He follows the method of Messrs. Nadal, Spender, and Gili, using the Dictionary as a Lucky Dip, which gave such hilarious results in the "Dolphin" edition. But he lacks that Walt Disney touch which immortalized their howlers. There is a sort of proletarian snarl which obtrudes also in his preface, and makes one feel that he is working off some long-nourished egalitarian grudge in debasing the noble and aristocratic poetry of Lorca.

Let us now see how he demeans the towering, vertical gladiatorial image, which I have explained, into a shoddy, crouching, cross-legged sartorial image. What serves him in the place of a poetic imagination

seems rather to have been bred to the metaphorical jabbing of fleas with a tailor's needle, than bulls with a sword! He seems quite singularly unsuited for the translation of Lorca's Taurine poetry. Here is Mr. Lloyd's version. The capitals are mine:—

> The day goes slowly by
> the evening hangs from one shoulder
> CASTING A HUGE JACKET
> over the sea and the streamlets.

This amounts to an assassination of Lorca's very soul. His outraged ghost must be screaming with rage, horror, and fright. As Mr. Lloyd perpetrates this deed of darkness he leaves bloodstained fingerprints on every page where he has so desperately fumbled the dictionary in his utter bamboozlement, so that it is quite easy to follow every antic and manoeuvre of his funny little scuttling mentality as it casts about for a meaning.

We can reconstruct the crime on the spot. Both the words "larga" and "torera" can be adjectives or nouns. Knowing that the noun "larga" is not given in the dictionary we can follow exactly what Mr. Lloyd did. As adjectives both "larga" and "torera" follow the nouns they qualify: but Mr. Lloyd does not care about such details, though that fact should have warned him. He looks up "torera" which in Lorca's context is a feminine adjective qualifying *larga*: and meaning "pertaining to bullfighting". He finds that *torera* can also mean a short, tightfitting kind of jacket. But a "long short jacket" is a contradiction in terms. So he changes "long" to "huge", shuts his eyes, hopes for the best, and bowls us a "wide" (or as he would call it "a huge") clean off the pitch!

To find an English equivalent of this very typical howler we shall have to uncross our legs metaphorically for a moment: and if my reader will kindly follow me to the Trouser-Department of this tailoring establishment, I will ask the assistant to show him a pair of LONG SHORTS!!

Mr. Lloyd is no happier when he flatly defies the dictionary and Lorca's text than when he is so pathetically faithful to both. Take this line: "y las gorras en las sienes": here Lorca describes the arrogant way the *carbineers* wear their peaked caps (as our British guardsmen wear their "cheese-cutters") pulled down over their noses. Literally it means: "and their caps on their temples, or brows". Mr. Lloyd translates this: "Their hats in their hands". Apparently, that time, he didn't even worry to fumble the dictionary. Lorca is extremely sensitive to landscape and pays attention to the very minutest details. He compares the crescent moon to a White Stork, a very common bird in Spain. Mr. Lloyd, of course, mistranslates this as a crane for which the correct word is "grulla", not "cigueña", the word Lorca uses. Now, in flight against the sky, the crane is non-luminous, of a drab ash-colour, and its spread wings form a rough quadrilateral with ragged extremities serrated by the finger-like

extremities of the wing-quills. The crane's silhouette is, moreover, conspicuously bisected by a large head, in line with a long bushy tail. The white stork's wings taper to points exactly like the crescent moon. It is luminously white: and its head and tail, at a great height, are almost imperceptible. This is a carefully-chosen image; and the mistranslation is typical of Mr. Lloyd's ignorance of, and insensitiveness to, the Andalusian landscape, where (except round Huelva) cranes are almost unknown. The "Dolphin" edition seems to have given people the idea that Lorca is fair game for any dunce armed with a dictionary. If Mr. Lloyd does not soar to the same heights of unconscious humour as the "Dolphin" trio, he is well worth following with a dictionary, just for the sake of those finger-prints. It becomes a game.

His translation is like a "Whodunnit" where one spots the culprit the whole time. It is a cruel advertisement of the pretentious shoddiness of modern British scholarship, that a book like this should appear with blurbs of praise on the cover from critics as prominent as Mr. V. S. Pritchett. It is difficult to imagine a literary motive for the publication of this formless "translation" which varies, from chopped prose to verse, rhyme, and assonance, at the author's own convenience. Political propaganda (a bit late in the day) seems to be Mr. Lloyd's *long suit* or rather his HUGE JACKET — in spite of the repeated protests of Lorca's friends, from Salvador Dali down to Mr. Nadal, at his being used as a tub to thump for the class-war. (Yes, reader! *you* would mix your metaphors too, if you had just been reading Mr. Lloyd!)

This book leaves the supremacy of the "Dolphin" edition unchallenged in the "howler" line. There is nothing here to equal that Walt-Disneyfied transubstantiation of the Spanish word for "flame", *llama*, into the animal of that name (a sort of cross between an army camel and a second-hand tricycle!) which infests the Andes of South America. However, it is not in vain that Mr. Lloyd's name begins with the same uncommon double initial that distinguishes that venerable quadruped: and it is also significant that in his "Select Bibliography" he gravely salutes the "Dolphin" trio — the original pioneers and Livingstones who so heroically "blazed the trail" for all these wool-gathering expeditions into Llama-land!

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service for Members. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s.

The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

VOICES ACROSS THE SEAS

RUSSIA TO-DAY

(Three Poems of 1952–53 Translated by JACK LINDSAY)

TRYST

STEPAN SHCHIPACHEV

City asleep, avenue bare:
only the leaves now whisper and sway.
A shy lad and his girl are there:
how close she is, how far away.
And loud, as they prepare to part
under the jacket knocks his heart.
Their breaths are mingled. Past his fear
he leans more near and yet more near;
Darling and *Love* he softly gasps,
and for the first time now her shoulder
warmly through her blouse he clasps
with hand grown firm yet scarcely bolder.
The thing called happiness is proudly,
it seems, here suddenly come true.
His heart has never throbbed so loudly.
A heaven of stars, a bush of dew,
strongly the universe is founded.
Ahead of time, the dawn's upblown.
These tryst-hours, joyously unbounded
and luminous, are the shortest known.

ALONG THE AVENUE OF THE FUTURE

BRONISLAV KEZHYN

Only clouds of crystalline shadow
as on a blue height are here;
and here is the hostess, Nestorova Zhenya,
the Green Engineer.

A lilac kerchief on her head, she shows
a face the noongold has tanned,
and along the future's avenue she goes
with a curved knife in her hand.

And from the trunks that stand washed white with lime
a gentle flick of the wrist

sends little shoots down fluttering all the time
on the earth in a green mist.

She doesn't fumble or fuss about with the trees,
and in time its proper size each tree discloses:
she has planted deftly with solicitous ease
bushes of double roses.

And that her work may gain its decoration
duly, seedlings push up from the mould
and out of the gardenplots the flames of carnation
burst, and asters of gold.

Here comes the hostess, Nestorova Zhenya,
and that means: There will be day
when along the earth, casting a thick shadow,
the spires of poplar sway.

A lilac kerchief on her head, she shows
her face the noongold has tanned,
as down the future's avenue the hostess goes
with a curved knife in her hand.

The boughs stretch out to her and the sun together,
and straight the acacias are found,
her fosterchildren of green, the poplars, gather
in long lines all around.

THE RAINBOW

KONSTANTIN SIMENOV

Now the field and the stream nèarby
suddenly grow duller.
Only the bow in the sky
possesses light and colour,

as though, lovely thing, it held
more than water-spray:
all the wealth with which Earth is spelled,
meadow and gardenway:

daisies yellow-and-white,
strawberries ripely red,
grass gold-shaken with light
and rye that will soon be bread.

In all their crimson and blue
from Earth their mother they rise,

the meadowflowers, and anew
they blossom in the skies.

Cloudflocks hurry and stray,
and heaven wide-open shows,
the rainbow melts away
and down on the woods it flows,

and, joy of the placid day,
wheat rustles on the ground,
and the fields are freshly gay,
with flowers, flowers, all round.

Where, joyous heart, is the bow?
Into Earth's deep breast did it pass?
Has it spilled its fallen glow
between the tips of the grass?

MODERNISM IN POETRY YES AND NO

READERS' FREE-FOR-ALL

"It was a great idea to give us those two reviews of one book *(Collected Poems 1934-1952.* by Dylan Thomas) and then allow us to join in the poetical free-for-all. Thank you". So writes a reader from Cape Town in response to the invitation by the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* for outspoken comments on the independently-written critiques (Yes and No to "Modernism") by John Graddon and Geoffrey Johnson. Many other readers have taken part in the controversy, which is now on a wider plane, and we print a selection from their miniature essays.

THE GALLIPOT BOYS

To call a whole generation of young poets "bobby soxers" and the "abracadabra boys" is not to hurt them. The genius who was to write immortal odes ("To a Nightingale" and "To a Grecian Urn", for example) was treated in his early years with contempt just as would-be harmful, and it has been one of literature's little worries that the practitioner in poetry who dares to experiment has never been given the respect and encouragement which a chemist does not fail to receive while he is testing and probing and adventuring in the laboratory. The only fault of the modernist is that he publishes his experiments long before they are completed and found to have virtue and value. But it is a very human fault and hardly deserves the conventionalist's belittlement.

JOHN GLOSSOP

BACK TO THE QUIETER VOICE

Dylan Thomas's extravaganza in adjectives tends to make much of his poetry akin to an obstacle-race, thus detracting from the pleasure one should derive from poetry. It may be laudable to swing to the other extreme from the coldly-academic technique of poetry, and produce poems over-emphasizing physical fundamentals in crudely-coined language; many lines seem intermediate, minus real beginning or ending, as disjointed rantings of a bombastic egotist in a fury, virile and barbarous though they may be.

But I fearlessly uphold phonetic rhyme, rhythm, and scanning, and the view of Arthur Row (April-June number) that ". . . working men would quote with vigour and enthusiasm from . . . Tennyson as words of dignity would mingle with their thoughts. Let us return to the noble language of a classic art, and much good will follow". And with Geoffrey Johnson — "What is the general drift of many a poem in this collection? Communication is the essence and ultimate criterion of art in any form".

When the novelty of brash mediums has worn off, and the ranting died down, the voices of some lesser-known poets might win an opportunity to be heard — if they are fortunate enough to manage publication of their poems — and ultimately it is invariably the quieter voice, the simpler word, written "for the love of man" and "in praise of God," that lingers longer in our ears and echoes musically and inspiringly in our hearts.

ELSIE M. BANISTER

A HAUGHTY LINE TO TAKE

Geoffrey Johnson, among other good remarks in his critique of Dylan Thomas's poems, concludes with the following: "Communication is the essence and ultimate criterion of art". This truth is emphasized in a recent review in the *Oxford Magazine*. You are free to quote from it if you wish, the Editor having given me his permission. The odd thing, in respect of all these "obscure" writers, is to note the infinite gullibility of otherwise apparently intelligent people.

"Dylan Thomas, whose *Collected Poems 1934–1952* have appeared, is desperately obscure. Doubtless posterity will select one or two of the difficult poets of our time for study and elucidation, but which? This emperor really does wear new clothes, but what? and why? To rely so much on expression to the poet's own self and come so near to abandoning communication is a haughty line to take and a risky one, which for most such poets must mean ultimate oblivion."

D. G. DAVIES

THESE INSANE GOINGS-ON

It seems to me that behind the controversy about Poetry lies the problem of differences in human types. Our reactions depend primarily on our inherent types — a reason why differences are so unbridgeable.

I find each article on Dylan Thomas right in its own way. Seen from the intellectual side, I agree whole-heartedly with Geoffrey Johnson. It is true that one "may ask what the general drift of many a poem is" — and it is equally true that with many a poem one just cannot get it.

The question is perhaps not what the general drift is, but whether a poem must have an intellectually understandable meaning. For people with a highly differentiated intellect anything outside of reason must be unacceptable.

But to the intuitive type these insane goings-on convey in a way too direct for articulation more wisdom than all the well-constructed Odes.

What I try to indicate is this: Poetry is the only form of verbal expression that need not be discursive. In prose, intelligibility hinges on correct denotations and connotations. In poetry, a single word, rightly placed, may convey a whole configuration of concepts and a poem can, for some, have a meaning without having a general drift.

I. ZUIDEMA

MAYBE I AM WRONG

The splitting up into irregular lines of poetic (?) ideas expressed in not too good prose does not make poetry. This, of course is a personal opinion. I like poetry to express something sharply and clearly; mysticism is allowable, but surely we do not want a poem so wrapped up in it that it is almost a foreign language. No doubt to the modern idea I am wrong, but I always thought poetry was originally intended to express a sentiment, thought, story, emotion, with a minimum of words, clearly and concisely, and that the metre and the rhyme was an aid to this end and to memory. Like some people's conception of the English language, spelling, and grammar, it is perhaps a wrong idea that I have been entertaining as regards English poetry.

From broken lives and broken dreams,
The poet strives with broken themes
To make words live and so to give
    The world a work of glory,
    Or — just another story.

J.F.R.

THE RAVAGED VINEYARD

SIDONIE SCHALL

I remember the bright air singing
And the frail birds flying,
The lusty voices shouting
And the wonder in waiting.

But the wind is still
    and folded are the wings.

Only the wild grape weeps.
She who was sown in delight
Is torn to the heart
Her ruby wine sinks deep in the heedless earth.

Heavy the stalks that curved o'er the wild wild berries
With O what tender care.

Once there was a vineyard
Fair were the blooms in its season
Lavish and fair,
What eager hand
Sought through the mother shield of leaves
And wrenched away the purple toil of the sun,
What twisted lips could close
On the bitter burden of their desire
Crushing the leaping stream of life
And find fulfilment there?

Soon in the dark vineyard
The ravaged fruit will bear its pain,
Closing its heart against the coming summers.

SUMMERHOUSE HILL

CHRISTOPHER LEVENSON

Summerhouse hill in the still West air
Steals away, and the wasting sea
Sinks to its creeks beyond the dunes
And breaks. As headlands disappear —
Listen! — an echo from the bay
Watch! — and a reflection of the moon
Whispers and stealthily dances amidst the trees.
The druid halflight on green stone
Is weird, a waterfall of leaf
Plays like a pipe consorting with the winds
Where a ruined Panic archway and its gate
Have tumbled long ago. A shuttered belvedere
Shadows the secret, wild lament,
Haunts with motion, the calm, empty hill.
So trembling until remotely half-lit,
Nature returns to earth . . . Swollen with dawn,
Glistening mountains wake from under the sea.
Stile and hedgerow abandon their intricate spell,
Cool tidal night is gone and grows forgotten.

POET OF MAURITIUS

By MICHAEL MALIM

The name and fame of Robert-Edward Hart are no longer unknown to the poets and friends of poetry in England. *The Poetry Review* has paid tribute to him in print, and *The Poetry Society* elected him at the Annual Meeting as an honorary member. The British Government bestowed distinction on him for his services to English poetry in his own country, which is Mauritius. And he is himself a poet of distinction, a British citizen by birth, but better known in France and India than anywhere else.

In a fascinating book, *Island of the Swan*, published last year by Longmans Green and Company, the author, Michael Malim, paid a great tribute to Robert-Edward Hart in a lengthy appendix devoted to his poetry. By permission of the author and the publishers, *The Poetry Review* is able to reproduce portions of this appendix, in which Mr. Malim speaks of "Robert-Edward de Keating" as "a remarkable phenomenon, peculiarly the product of his island.

"As his name shows," Mr. Malim continues, "he is to a considerable extent Irish; but his ancestors came from France to settle in Mauritius in the days when it was the 'Ile de France'. He remains a Celt, instinctively romantic. But he is enthralled by a Latin passion for precision of thought, image and expression. Intellectually he is a Frenchman in love with English lyricism. It is characteristic of him that, although his Franco-Irish ancestry should, by tradition, make him hostile and contemptuous of English culture, he is an uncompromising champion of English literature, and of English political and social instinct. This is largely because he detects in the English temperament a mystical tendency in harmony with his own.

"Intellectually he might be described as European in a late medieval or early Renaissance sense; a sense, that is to say, far wider than the word 'European' commonly carries to-day. He has, of course, in his remote island the advantage of detachment from the immediate tug and thrust of modern narrow loyalties. He can survey the world as if he were on another planet; and he can do so with an almost unique quality of vision, for he belongs spiritually to Asia.

"Hart's poetry is the expression of a continual struggle not so much in search of God or spiritual truths as of a medium, an image which can reveal truth already, if obscurely, perceived. It is, in fact, a message; and in that sense it might be said to be no more than a confession of faith. But Hart himself would reject that definition. The message is not resoluble into a doctrine. It is an invitation to seek and find an experience which may be described, perhaps, as an emotion. But it pre-supposes

nothing, unless it be this: that God is all and all is God. God is Beauty, and everything, in God and as God, is beautiful. Matter is 'maya', the illusion, a temporary condition and imprisonment of the spirit which seeks and ultimately achieves, by 'escape' or what may be called 'transubstantiation', refusion with God, the Eternal and Universal Spirit, in a moment of perpetual, ecstatic serenity.

"The poems are lucid and full of delicate sensibility to sound and light. Their imagery is necessarily topical and appreciation gains, of course, from a knowledge of the poet's environment; but they are universally intelligible as pictures alone which might be taken as little more than exceptionally sensitive description unless the message behind them is felt. The 'Enseignement de la Colline' from his *Plenitudes,* published in 1948, is a good example:—

Seigneur de la Beauté, ce monde est une extase
Où l'arbre prophétise et la pierre médite,
Où toute laideur vient de l'homme,
Où tout est Toi sauf, dans les villes sacrilèges,
La dévoration de l'humain par l'humain.

"The poem reveals the reçluse, his back turned in disgust upon the cities of men, self-imprisoned in his coral hermitage and crying for Paradise Lost. Confronted with the apotheosis of Science by a world apparently incapable of resisting organization into the blind slavery of the termitary, Hart, as mystic and humanist, is doubly pessimistic, and sometimes surrenders to despair, seeing nothing in modern 'Progress' but a Gadarene stampede down into the new Dark Age.

"Hope, where he can find it, is purely personal, and rests in the indestructibility, by material means, of the individual soul and in the certainty of its ultimate reunion with God, the Universal Spirit, the 'Lord of Beauty':

"Ils ont tout tué sauf le poète et l'enfant
Et la mer où s'efface à l'instant leur sillage.
Seul le rire exorcise et seul le départ sauve.
Un navire? Pourquoi? L'Esprit
Vole plus vite et loin que l'alcyon lui-même.
Vous pouvez torturer la chair et la Nature:
De vos griffes toujours s'évade l'âme humaine."

INVITATION

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre of The Poetry Society in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

ORIOLE POETS GROUP OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

Dedicated to furthering the work of active poets within the Society, the Oriole Group, meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, "to hear each other's work and discuss the spirit and substance of poetry". All interested are invited to communicate with me at The Well House, Ewell, Surrey — LEIGH HENRY.

INSENTIENT?

D. MURRELL SIMMONS

What agony unknown —
the breaking strain before a picture falls,
the weary shuddering of ancient walls,
the chafe of wood and metal in the dark,
the hopelessness of an extinguished spark,
the flaking of a stone . . .

Be sure, not man alone
but all that works and wears beneath a stress,
all things created suffer, and possess
a true life of their own.

SONG

W. H. HAMILTON

Foot-loose as gipsies we'll vagabond about
At Paradise on Donside until the summer's out;
Heart-whole and care-free,
Or near it as the lave be,
Gadabout by Monymusk and hear the cuckoo shout.

Picnic by the riverside, trip it on the moors,
Loll and sprawl on heathy beds as long as summer's ours;
By the Brig of Alford stop
And hear the pods o' broom go pop
Till all the North is crimsoned and the late night lowers.

Quaff our fill of Gairie air and feel the surging vigour,
Charge our veins with strength afresh and every thew make trigger
Till November's here again
And Winter's dreary driving rain
Finds us fit and fortified to front its surly rigour.

Scent and silence, dreamsome heat, and wild-flowers' rout —
Honeysuckle, sweet-brier and pinewood stout —
Medicine for tedium
And all the world's afflictions: Come!
Foot-loose as gipsies, let's vagabond about.

"THE MOVING FINGER"

LAURENCE H. WILLIAMS

Autumn, to me, is like a manuscript
  In characters of amber, bronze, and gold,
Illuminated by the skilful hand
  Of some devout calligraphist of old.

In those decaying fruits and withered flowers
  I read the story of recurring Spring,
The last frail snowflake, and the hyacinth,
  The flash of sunlight on a swallow's wing;
I seem to feel the Summer's wayward breeze,
  Scented and soft, that trips with silent feet
Through the warm orchard and across the dell,
  Bending like waves the field of ripening wheat.

Autumn inscribes her melancholy page
  As looming Winter dims the northern skies,
And though the years add each their paragraph
  The manuscript unfinished lies.

ON THE VANISHED SAND

DENNIS PECK

The sand, whereon in summer children played
And lovers warmed their bodies in the sun,
While others sat together in the shade,
Content to watch the hours unnumber'd run,
Is gone; and nothing now is lying there
But naked rocks from which the jealous sea
Has taken all that made them seem so fair,
Leaving them without their canopy.
So, for the winter months, they must lie cold
Until the sea shall come again in spring
And, bearing in its arms the yellow gold,
Once more o'er them a fitting garment fling,
  So that the children once again can play,
  And lovers lie all through the summer's day.

THE LONELY ONE

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Sad on a sunflower morning
When carolling spears of every gold
Provoke the stone;
Unwarmed by the leafy beacons burning,
So she goes,
The lonely one.

Mute in a panoply of stars
Until the daemon frost returning
Sets in her path his scimitars,

Then she will carry her sorrow
To another place, a profounder cold,
To monotone;
Where beauty's voice is a broken arrow
That troubles no more
The lonely one.

MORNING

MARY BANES

I have heard lost voices call like bells
Breaking above the stillness of the dawn;
And known, when on the dark the fire-flame wings
Were spread, the spirit rise with light reborn.

Clear rings the joyful music from the grey:
Birds' silver trumpets raised to day's release.
Now falls forgetfulness on care and pain;
Now out of sleeplessness awakens peace.

For solitary on fragrant, crystal branch
One throat out-soars the shaken, singing air,
Gilds the ascending sun and heavenward moves
A heart that in the night dragged hell's despair.

POOR HUMAN DOGS

KATHLEEN M. CHAPIN

Poor human dogs, chained in your fleshy kennels
Starkly confined by dark mortality,
Beset about by earthly limitations
Unexercised, restricted, never free.

Yet know ye, dogs, that in an hour appointed
A hand shall stoop to loose you from your chains,
Desolate then the yard, the hated kennel,
Gone all the cramp, the wretchedness, the pains.

Know ye not, dogs, that there are hills and valleys,
Cool streamlets sparkling in the summer sun,
Wide boundless spaces, heather-covered moorlands?
There ye shall bark for joy, and run — and run!

CELESTIAL TRIBUTE

(From the Nineteenth Psalm)

F. D. WALKER

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord,
In shining letters of celestial light;
Across their boundless spaces they record
The wonders of His wisdom and His might.
The radiant splendour of the rising sun
Awakes the mountain peaks to ecstasy,
And on the new page of the day begun
Inscribes, with golden pen, God's majesty.
His greatness is with eloquence expressed
By all the grandeur of the sunset rays;
And then the moon's pure silver beams invest
The night with beauty and reflect His praise;
While countless stars show forth His wondrous skill,
And move in perfect rhythm to His will.

THE POETRY OF GEORGE MEREDITH

By WILLIAM WOLFF

There were two qualities in the character of George Meredith from which the best of his poetry derived. The first of them was a love of the open country. He was a handsome, vital and athletic man, and many are the accounts of his long tramps, in eager conversation with some jovial companion, over the Surrey hills that he loved so well. In these same Surrey hills he made his home on the slopes of Box Hill.

His interest in and curiosity about the feminine sex were unbounded, and in this we find the second source of his literary power. At the age of twenty-one he married a daughter of Thomas Love Peacock, the novelist, poet and friend of Shelley. This impetuous marriage of romance resulted in quarrels and eventually in the desertion of Meredith by his wife. In 1864, at the age of thirty-six, he married again and this union was as happy as it was in Meredith's nature to make any union happy. Throughout his long life he maintained close friendship with several women, notably with Janet Duff-Gordon, whom he had known from her childhood.

His best-known poem, "Love in the Valley", was written when he was twenty-three and when his first marriage was still reasonably happy. It is a vital and unique poem, irradiated with a feeling of romance and of young love. A sense of morning in the English countryside and of surging hope in the white sunrise of life pervades it. The young poet is drawn by his love and by the beauty of its rural setting and we feel him almost impatiently alternating between the overpowering inspiration of both. Here is the young lover:

> Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
> Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
> Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
> Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

In the very next stanza, the countryside has drawn him:

> Happy happy time, when the white star hovers
> Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
> Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
> Threading it with colour, like yewberries the yew.
> Thicker crowd the shades as the grave East deepens
> Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
> Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
> Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

Observe how Meredith weaves his two sources of inspiration together; in the first passage the girl is "morning light" and in the second the

image is reversed and "maiden still the morn is". Thus the two great driving forces of the poet's life were fused into a beautiful and vital poem.

In the poem, "Modern Love", we have a very different piece of work. It was written soon after the conclusion of Meredith's first marriage and the series of incidents described in the poem contains much of the story of the failure of the marriage. It cannot be denied that the relating of the incidents in the bitterly sarcastic stanzas of this long poem tends at times to grow tedious and it is interesting to compare it with Dowson's well-known "Cynara" on a not entirely dissimilar theme. The main situation around which "Cynara" is written is not explicitly related in the poem and yet it is perfectly understood by the reader.

Meredith doubtless acted quite deliberately in giving explicit details at considerable length though whether his choice was artistically a correct one is a matter for speculation. But when the poet steps back from the circumstance of his sad story and reflects on its significance, the poetry is magnificent. With a master hand, he can stage his scene so that storm and wind can intensify mood.

"Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave!
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand."

In much of Meredith's other poetry it is difficult to find a very high degree of inspiration. We know that he preferred to be thought of as a poet rather than as a novelist and one is tempted to think that much of his poetry was written more in an endeavour to fulfill that ambition than as proceeding from any real creative inspiration. But inspiration certainly visited him again when, with most of his life behind him, he wrote the very beautiful and technically perfect poem, "A Ballad of Past Meridian". The first of its three stanzas is indicative of its mood and perfection:

Last night returning from my twilight walk
I met the grey mist Death, whose eyeless brow
Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk
He reached me flowers as from a withered bough:
O Death, what bitter nosegays givest thou?

How are we to assess Meredith's future poetic reputation? For many, the greatness of poetry consists in the reverberations and overtones of the words used, in the new senses conferred upon old words, and in universal application rather than in the accurate description of the particular. I think it is true that the greatest poetry must include these things, and inasmuch as they are not, in any marked degree, found in Meredith, in my view his poetry cannot rank amongst the greatest. But, at his best, his power to convey feeling to the reader is superb. To read "Love in the Valley" is to feel the pulse of the young lover beating and to read "Past

Meridian" is to mourn with the ageing man. This quality has enabled him to produce, in the poems from which I have quoted, work which is certainly major poetry.

Meredith died in 1909 at the age of eighty-one with a great mass of literary work accomplished. Early love and its disillusionment had for the old man long been distant memories but their embodiments in his poetry remain to charm and fascinate all who read them. He was buried in Dorking, and on his tomb are inscribed the opening words of his favourite stanza:

> Life is but a little holding, lent
> To do a mighty labour. It is one
> With heaven and the stars when it is spent
> To do God's aim. Else die we with the Sun.

Surely he has had his wish. For his poetry has not, I think, died with his sun.

THE DIE-HARD

ALICE ALMENT

We who are old,
Remembering how music falls to rest,
Resolving storm and stress in ordered close,
Must now accept
The cadence crowned with no serene reward,
But in suspense, upon an alien chord.

We who have known
Poetry from childhood, revelled in her, loved
The stately, patterned rhythms of yesterday,
Must now explore
Thought set in harder mould and newer speech;
Through wordy labyrinths our minds are sped,
Seeking in vain an Ariadne-thread.

Not so for me.
I cannot hold that art should mirror life
While life is misted in a passing gloom.
The Sun remains.
Content and healing walk in quiet fields
Where light wakes diamonds on the fleeting showers.
Man cannot teach the thrush to sing a dirge,
Nor will the honeysuckle wave black flowers.

TEMPUS EDAX RERUM

S. THOMAS ANSELL

Time, the devourer of all things
Fold your wings;
Let me a little while, a breathing space,
Hold my beloved in my arms, and look
Eternity in the face.

Time, the enemy of all we hold,
Leave not old
My fair beloved who is very young,
Whose eyes, hair, lips and love are mine, and whom
My lips have for all time sung.

Time, the destroyer, leave for awhile
Her young smile;
Hold back, O Messenger of fleet-foot years
That bring, as bring they to all lovely things,
The ultimatum of tears.

"SONNET"

PETER FISON

Break not for me the roses nor for me
Seek in the tourist symbol, Time, to find
A solace reincarnate in the mind
Whose echo lies beyond eternity.
We wrap ourselves in Time as in stale shrouds.
Our souls, the withered satraps of disease,
Quaver for comprehension, as the trees,
Tombstones to a forgotten summer, stand
Waving impetuous branches at the brand
That wastes its smoky passion on the clouds.
Seek out divinity beyond the breath
And pray that goddess take you for a lover,
Sense thought in apprehension and discover
The intellectual hierarchies of death.

SHAKESPEARE WAS PROSPERO

By HOWARD PARSONS

It is now generally accepted that we can glean much about Shakespeare from the plays. But it is still worth emphasizing that he personified himself in Prospero of *The Tempest*. Prospero's magical powers are made known to us in the very first scene on the island.

Prospero says to Miranda: "Lend thy hand and pluck my magic garment from me." He then says, "So, lie there, my art," the mantle having been removed by his daughter and handed to him. Malone, the eighteenth-century commentator appositely quotes Lord Burleigh, who, when he discarded his gown at night, used to say, "Lie there, Lord Treasurer," evidence that Prospero's magic garment was a mere symbol of power and not its source. Again, Prospero's staff is a symbol, mentioned only when he has decided to wield it no longer: "I'll break my staff." We may compare the words spoken by Gloucester in *Henry VI*: "Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court, was broke in twain." And Richard II is reported by Hotspur to have "broken his staff of office and dispersed the household of the king."

In Act IV of *The Tempest* Prospero made much use of magic, apparently without donning his robe or wielding his staff, for neither are mentioned. But he puts on his robe before a word is spoken in Act V; for the Folio reads: "Enter Prospero (in his Magicke robes)." This suggests that Shakespeare introduced robes and staff because they are the customary stage properties of a magician, and with no intention that they were to be considered as sources of power.

Prospero says of himself, "Me (poor man) my library was dukedom large enough:" and then, a little later, he speaks of "volumes that I prize above my dukedom." He did so because of the power he obtained from them as when he says "And by my prescience I find my zenith doth depend upon a most auspicious star." But there was one book, all the others being of small account by comparison, "I'll to my book, for yet ere supper-time, must I perform much business appertaining," that is, business connected with the supernatural masque. Two acts later: "But this rough magic I here abjure: — I'll drown my book." These testimonies that knowledge is power and that its source is books are supported by Caliban, who says, "Thou mayst brain him, having first seized his books . . . Remember first to possess his books; for without them he's but a sot . . . Burn but his books". Again, Caliban tells Prospero: "Thou wouldst teach me how to name the bigger light, and how the less, that burn by day, and night: *and then I lov'd thee*". The last five words exhibit a passion for knowledge, though books may have had no part in his tuition.

It has been said that "Shakespeare did not spend all his time in the

library of the British Museum", but it can now be seen that, as a young man, he would have much frequented it, had the opportunity been his. Milton wrote of him that he "warbled his native wood-notes wild", and Jonson, that he had "small Latin and less Greek". Undue prominence has been given to those remarks, for their effect was negatived by others, made later, by the same writers. Their former remarks suggest Shakespeare was not a well-read man; their later ones remove that impression. It was early in his great poem, "To the Memory of my Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare and What He hath left us," that Jonson said he had "small Latin and less Greek", but some lines further on, we read: "For a good poet's made as well as born and such wert thou". This implies that he knew his friend had spent a vast amount of time in studying books; that without such application, his inborn talent could not have flourished into its unequalled perfection — for books are the chief source of the material without which a poet cannot build his lines. Milton, in his famous epitaph "On Shakespeare", mentions "those *Delphic* lines", thus inferring that Shakespeare's writings equalled in wisdom the pronouncements of the most famous of the Greek oracles — which more than amends the former remark.

In one of my early "Emendations" I quoted from *As You Like It*, "he's gentle, *never schooled* and yet learned", and suggested it was applicable to the poet himself. If that quotation is considered in conjunction with those from *The Tempest* it is convincing that he learnt little at *school*, probably leaving it when he was no more than fourteen or fifteen years old.

Prospero gives an allegorical illustration of his creator's art when he calls spirits (characters) "from the vasty deep" and makes them appear substantial. The interesting question arises as to who was the writer of the work alluded to as "my book?" Had Shakespeare confined himself to historical plays, one might have hazarded that he referred to his indebtedness to Holinshed, on whose "Chronicles" he relied, but his comedies and tragedies were founded on plots derived from other sources. He modestly described his unrivalled art as "rough magic". Perhaps he gave, in a phrase ("my book"), an acknowledgement to all the writers whose works he used as his raw material, and that he considered that without such aid, he would have been severely handicapped in *shaping his ends*, had the *rough hewers* not prepared his material; his razor-edged intellect being no tool for *chopping blocks*.

In the final act of *The Tempest*, Prospero gives a list of wonders he has performed by means of his "so potent art", all of which are occurrences in the play. He then proceeds to abjure his "rough magic" and says:—

> I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.

The Tempest was among the last of Shakespeare's writings. He seemed to know that his health was nearly gone, and to foresee that his poetical power would shortly follow, for the Epilogue starts "Now my charms are all o'er-thrown, and what strength I have's mine own, which is most faint:" hence his desire to "retire me to my Milan (Stratford), where every third thought shall be my grave."

It has been shown that this play is concerned with the beginning and the end of its author's career: his other works speak for the interim — "The story of my life, and the particular accidents gone by since I came to this isle". It was while on the "uninhabited island" that his plays and poems were produced (which are self-revealing); and the name of the island was London!

PREFACE FOR A COLLECTION

ROBERT GREACEN

The arrow, shot by practised hand
That many times the selfsame route has chosen
Flies winged to that point exact
The hand decreed. Yet further flies
Towards unknown infinity, a blue-grey blur
That's in the mind unmapped.

Each poem is an arrow, too,
Shaped for its definite flight
Yet hiding a most secret destination
Even its own maker cannot know.
Speed then each poem to that known point
My little cunning can command —
And onwards where you will!

MARKOVA

J. J. CURLE

As wind-curl wave-curl tossed curl wild tress
Blow out from curve to line,
As spindrift, sea-drift, lift, sift, fine,
Float, fade to fall,
You, wrapped, lapped, lost in all,
Dream, dart delicious-wise,
Dance delicate, witch eyes,
Catch-at, caress, hint, hesitate, fulfil
In your one-world what fading lingers still.

Book Reviews . . .

VARIOUS TRADITION

By HERBERT PALMER

The Ermine: Poems 1942–1952, by Ruth Pitter (Cresset Press, 8s. 6d.). *The Ballad of Sir John Philpot,* by Kenneth Hare (Robert Hale, 8s. 6d.). *Sincerity,* by James Stuart (Rubicon Press, 6s.).

A vast body of English poetry has recently diverged from its natural historic centre. Much of it is pretentious or obscure and ridiculous, with a disregard of syntax and imaginative logic that puts many a so-called poet below the dunces of a primary school. Fortunately those slow-moving patrons, the publishers, are now aware of the dry rot and are rejecting the worst of it, but the universities are not always faithful to their high calling, and continue to fly, in places, their own Judas-coloured flag.

It would be unnecessary to say all this but for the stifling effect upon verse that really matters. Only a few poets have shown themselves heroically uncontaminated, among them Ruth Pitter, who comes midway between the old generation and the new.

She has completely turned her back on all except absolute values, and escaped into divine serenity. If she is sometimes a little vague, or seems to aim beyond her grasp, she is always melodious and finely sensitive, intimate with her world of Nature and Spirit, and kneeling at the feet of God. *The Ermine* is like a white star peeping through murky cloud.

Perhaps the immediate future of English Poetry lies in the hands of women. I think Ruth Pitter's only competitor in her own special sphere is Phoebe Hesketh, but she is rather more disciplined than Mrs. Hesketh, though less given to memorable phrasing.

Kenneth Hare's art, while not in the least modernist, stands right away from the restrained, classical diction of Ruth Pitter. He is romantically old-fashioned that he borrows from speech that died during the last century — not all of it as late as D. G. Rossetti. This was all very well in his masterly rendering of that medieval dialect poem, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (how it held and thrilled some of us!) but such a long narrative as this new poem of his — *The Ballad of Sir John Philpot* — will chiefly attract readers who are interested in the period of Richard II. Whatever its defects the poem is detailed, colourful, and exuberant.

But how diverse are the notes of these poets who have turned their backs on the capital letters of New Verse! Here is *Sincerity,* by James Stuart, who is so immersed in sincerity and its communication that no one will ever be in imaginative doubt as to what he means. Few half-lights, few undertones, much bald self-revelation, some of which is rather painful and prosaic. He is a poet of promise rather than finished performance, and is feeling his way.

POUND STERLING

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Translations of Ezra Pound (Faber, 30s.).

This is a literary treasure chest, with rare gems, old gold and curiosities out of antiquity — the collected translations of Ezra Pound. The American poet is now approaching his seventieth year, and the book contains his life-work as far as translation is concerned. The assiduity and devotion involved indicate a remarkable personality. Anyone who thinks slightingly of Ezra Pound should, after perusing this volume, admit that the poet is not merely one who has thrown an inkpot at the public.

Because he was in love with Italy the poet has been *investigated* and is under a cloud, in a home. Perhaps Browning, had he been caught up in a war, would have been investigated, seeing that he wrote: "Open my heart and you will see graved inside of it — Italy". But it is a curious business, investigating a poet. "What is your trade?" — "Verse". "What does it bring in in an average year?" — "About 30 cents". "So, you are forced to confess you have to supplement your income. From whom did you receive?" — "Cavalcanti . . . Dante". "Are those individuals still at large?" — "Oh, believe me, very much at large!"

Ezra Pound must have lived a long while with the thirteenth century poet Cavalcanti; for in these collected translations we have nearly sixty pages of English verse, interleaved with the original Italian. You take the two together to get perfect appreciation of the poetry, and in effect Cavalcanti is made to live again. It is done for the sake of Cavalcanti and medieval poesy.

After Cavalcanti the book moves back a century to the troubadour Arnaut Daniel, most of whose eighteen lyrics are given in the original with clever versification in English opposite. It is said that Arnaut was deliberately obscure, so that his songs should not be understood by the vulgar. Rather modern.

The next section of the collection is ancient Chinese, and has many beautiful passages. The originals could not profitably be given and it is possible that the translations are far from literal. The English is freer and more inspirational than in the case of Cavalcanti and Arnaut. "The Song of the Bowmen" reads like a fine original poem. Similarly "The River Song" has a clear loveliness:

> High over the willows, the fine birds sing to
> each other, and listen,
> Crying — *Kwan, Kuan,* for the early wind, and
> the feel of it.
> The wind bundles itself into a bluish cloud
> and wanders off.

Over a thousand gates, over a thousand doors
are the sounds of spring singing,
And the Emperor is at Ko.
Five clouds hang aloft, bright on the purple sky.

After this Chinese interlude, Ezra Pound turns his roving quill to Anglo-Saxon, and writes:—

Lest man know not
That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter.

After the Anglo-Saxon we have Pound's study of the early Japanese, so curious that anything said about it in a short review must prove inadequate. It is a gift to the reader, not the critic.

CRITICISM BY A POET

By JOHN GRADDON

Private View, by Walter de la Mare (Faber, 18s.).

Here are essays, most of which have appeared anonymously in *The Times Literary Supplementary,* the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* and the *Edinburgh Review* many years ago — a mere fragmentary sifting from a mass of material of the same kind. Is there another living critic from whose literary past a similar exhumation could be made to run so clear and limpid, and illumine and excite the mind of the reader?

The art of criticism has been defined to extinction and no definition contains the example practised by Mr. de la Mare. Lord David Cecil, in a preface, says it is as unashamedly personal as that of Charles Lamb. The truth is that Mr. de la Mare is a medium, with books for clients and through the poet's crystal of his mind he receives his impressions, transforming, transfiguring, and often transcending the matter before him. The form, the light, the colour of the work he contemplates, changes, fades and intensifies as his thoughts run. Tranquilly, dreamily, penetratingly, meditatively he writes of what he sees.

It is his vision, but he never intrudes. He is never aware of an audience, is never clever, nor patronising, nor indeed, critical. As the leaves flicker he is, quite unconsciously, the seer who selects, describes and explains with a commentary searching, strange, exclusively, intensely personal.

Over and over again, forgetful of the limitations of confining space, one sighs for more on the same subject, and finds it difficult to turn the mind to the next review. Biographies, collected works and a miscellany of unrelated subjects form the contents, but it is perhaps when he writes of those poets most close to his heart that his particular genius takes fire.

Then the poet's vision of the poet's work becomes a consummate discrimination in art.

At the conclusion of a brief essay on Metaphor, he is considering Keats's

> His soul shall taste the sadness of her might
> And be among her cloudy trophies hung . . .

"In what region of wake and dream are we here, how shall we sever metaphor from the naked statement, how dissociate the picture from that which it depicts, how disentangle the mood and feeling expressed from the vision? So in the purest poetry the image is lost in the thing in itself, and that is as it were but a translucent veil between two realities."

In the last essay, "My Mind to Me . . .", he considers the resources of the most value, use and comfort to the unmethodical traveller:—

"If he retains in lively activity his seven senses and his five wits, then *all* his mind will be the least of it he will need; and especially a rich and ready memory and, for starry zenith, an imagination which bestows on him a universe compared with which the round world itself, safely circumnavigated, will prove to have been but a bubble — however lovely, iridescent and inexhaustible."

The imagination which has illumined so much more in the unrequiting past, must solace the present with more of his "private view".

FREEDOM AND LICENCE

By KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Of Love, by Tom Boggs (Hand and Flower Press, 3s. 6d.).
Spring and Death, by Charles Higham (Hand and Flower Press, 3s. 6d.).
Rod of Incantation, by Francis King (Longmans, 9s. 6d.).
Collected Poems, by J. P. Angold (Peter Russell, 8s. 6d.).
Fells and Flowers, by Nan Simpson (Fortune Press, 8s. 6d.).
The Evening Listens, by Ruth Ainsworth (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).

There is much chaos in the world of poetry to-day, and it is not difficult to see where the chaos lies and whence it arises. To be successfully eccentric, one must first know where the centre is, and many of our poets are off-centre, not from deliberate choice but because they have never found the centre.

Only those who have learned to conform to rules are justified in breaking them. Real freedom is to be found within the law, not outside of it. The law-abiding enjoy a freedom that is unknown to licence or outlawry. Having served a long apprenticeship to form, the accomplished poet can bring to Free Verse a wealth (in diction, imagery, music, and thought) acquired through the enriching years; but our chaos to-day

springs from the hordes of undisciplined writers who are making a bee-line for the Board Room, though they have never been apprentices in the workshop.

To all such, the institutions of rhyme and metre, for example, seem merely restrictive, but it is one of the paradoxes of experience (and truth is often found to be along the line of paradox) that the more the poet puts fetters on his ankle, the more featly can he dance. It is the foot-loose who are gouty and varicose.

The poets under review are effective in the degree in which they submit to the so-called tyranny of form. Tom Boggs, the American author of the unpretentious volume called *Of Love*, is utterly modern in spirit, for he deals with blaring radios, chromium kitchens and town-planning; but varying his stanza-form and the length of the line, he yet keeps his work within the co-ordination of a rhyme-scheme, and is deeply satisfying.

Charles Higham has the poet's authentic touch, for he quixotically sets himself the hardest technical challenges and triumphantly meets them. He is at his best in a poem based on a quotation from Sir Thomas Browne that this world is not an inn but a hospital. In the hands of novelist Francis King rhyme is not an applied decoration but is (as it should be) an element organic and essential to the structure it adorns. The fastidiousness of his work in the sonnet he brings no less to his other poems where the intricate form is imposed by no one but himself. It is this kind of self-restriction that begets the true freedom.

Much in the collected poems of J. P. Angold makes one regret that this is a posthumous volume. He contrived to produce poetry in the difficult form of the ballade, and maybe it was in a boisterous reaction from it that he produced such regrettable lines as this:

$$at\ \frac{95{,}000{,}000 \times 211}{365 \times 24}\ m.p.h.$$

Nan Simpson manages to avoid the defects of her virtues, for her simplicity never becomes merely naïve, or her metrical precision monotonous. Ruth Ainsworth is a lapidary in words, and though her lines are never of thin significance, she presents this paradox — that the shorter the poem, the more she contrives to say.

TRIBUTE

The publishing firm of George Ronald, Wheatley, Oxford, has quickly won a place among our leading publishers of poetry. At this time such a practical interest is especially welcome. Poets are receiving much discouragement from all too many publishing houses which now "regret" that they do not consider verse MSS any longer.

A review of George Ronald's latest publication, Alexander Buist's *The Gleam and the Dark* will be published in our next number.

STEFAN GEORGE AND OTHERS

By PAUL SELVER

Twentieth-century German Verse: A selection translated by Herman Salinger. (Princeton University Press: Geoffrey Cumberledge, 16s.).

This book contains forty-two translations, faced by the originals, from twenty-one German poets. The diversity of their styles ranges from the stately mannerisms of Stefan George to the madcap whimsicalities of Christian Morgenstern, with quite a number of intermediate gradations.

In attempting to reproduce worthily in English such varied specimens of poetic diction, Mr. Salinger has undertaken a task of great difficulty, and it is therefore not surprising that his versions are distinguished more by promise than by fulfilment. Moreover, he too often cuts the Gordian knot of verse-translation by embroidering on the originals to secure a convenient rhyme. Thus: "How can sleep fold my eyes *or wrap my head . . .*?" (p. 3), "with evening fears, *with daylight thinned*" (p. 39), "or the wind stirs *dewy* twigs *that glisten*" (p. 41), "or a far hound bays *with outstretched throat*" (p. 41), "now bounteous night *that knows no end*" (p. 43), "On pale pond-water *sewn with stars*" (p. 71), "A nun prays nude *with bated breath*" (p. 71), "in the wall, *deep under plaster and brick*" (p. 73), "rats bound in spasm *by his artful hand*" (p. 87), "down muddy shores they plunge, *squealing and wheezing*" (p. 87).

In all these examples, to which many others could be added, the words in italics reveal the shifts adopted by Mr. Salinger in his quest for rhyme. The last item in the book, however, "It was my Blood" by Hans Egon Holthusen, is almost entirely free from this particular blemish, and in it Mr. Salinger reaches an altogether higher level of achievement as regards diction as well.

A SHEAF OF POETRY BOOKS

Notes by The Editorial Staff

(The inclusion of a book in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review)

There is so much worth recalling in the verse recently published that all the available space in these pages might well be devoted to quotations from it. Here is an example, included in the late G. Laurence Groom's posthumous work — *The Magic Country* (Castle Press, 10s. 6d.) — much of it about Greece, where the author lived for nearly twenty years:

Vain are your careless arrows, Fate,
Your choicest darts I should not feel,
My heart knows neither love nor hate,
Thrice tempered to the triple steel.

The quotation indicates Mrs. Groom's quality. She was a romantic without being a sentimentalist. Readers who know her earlier books will be glad of the portrait-frontispiece to this one, her last.

Dr. Edith Sitwell has contributed a "preface" to *So Late Into the Night*, fifty lyrics by Sydney Goodsir Smith (Peter Russell, 8s. 6d.). "I believe such poems as 'The Mandrake Hert', 'Ye Spier Me,' 'Saagin', and, above all, 'Defeat o the Hert', with its magnificent last stanza, to be amongst the few poems by a poet now under forty to which the word 'great' can be applied." So writes Dr. Sitwell, and it will be gathered from her forthright enthusiasm that Sydney Goodsir Smith has breathed new fire into a language that Burns made imperishable.

"So many wondrous things have been done by candlelight," writes an English exile in America, A. E. Johnson, that he prays "may the morrow never come where no one anywhere makes candles!" Mr. Johnson's poetry in *The Crown and the Laurel* (George Ronald, 5s.), quiet, musical, wistful, might have been written by candlelight . . .

Charles Causley's verses in *Survivor's Leave* (Hand and Flower Press, 3s. 6d.) were surely written at sea. They have a lilt of sparkling waters, and many a salty yarn comes to the sailor's lips. Technically there is high quality in them, even when the ocean is not the inspiration:

General tell, when the red rose dying
Snows with fire the watchful tree,
As the blossoms burn do you turn to see
My body of stone on the lone beach lying?

Ambitious indeed is Lewis Grahame, although his *Poems* are his "first printing". He feels advanced enough, all the same, to dispense entirely with rhyme, depending upon the most luxurious words within his reach and the most sensuous imagery. Nor does he depend in vain:

butterflies, terrapines,
Sweets that can even be tasted again!

Posy-holders peccadiloes blue Magnolias,
Nameless opals in a diamond lake —

If that is not enough, then this: "Strawberries pickled in pink maraschino."

Out of tragedy, sorrow, and world's scorn "Beauty was fashioned in golden words," writes Aubrey Lees in a poem "To Alfred Douglas," one of a dozen contributed to various publications and presented as *A Beardsley Drawing* (Bealls, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1s.). But "golden" means something different from that of Lewis Grahame — except in the Beardsleyesque title-poem.

For the first time since 1913 an anthology of the work done by the students and staff at a famous North-country university has been compiled by R. P. Jones and J. M. Park: *Manchester University Poetry* (Sycamore Press, Leigh, Lancashire, 2s. 6d.). There are eleven contributors, and their standard is a worthy one, with an exception here and there as in "Regrets" and "Reply". "Snow in Autumn" is rich and rare by comparison.

In a foreword to *The Guiding Hand and other Poems* (The Adventurers, Boston), Robert Hendon, the author, declares that "Poetry is the affirmation of the indwelling spirit, the unveiling of the inner man, what he is and what he would be. It is the music of the gods that is yours to share, when the mood permits." Then he goes on to confess in verse that "ours is the tongue of languishing lovers and thinkers." He seems earnest and forthright, and not languishing at all.

At the age of eighteen Huldah Manuel, of Boston, U.S.A., wrote a poem that was printed in the anthology of *The Best Poems of 1936*. Now in her thirties this poet of promise has published *Twenty-Three Poems* (Amphion Press, $2.). Her development is amazing. She finds herself "fugitive from the great cities, the roaring plains, the heart-beat of a people — living and dying, alone in a wilderness of nothing . . . " Her readers will share the tremendous impression of being "out of step with time."

The charming Nativity play by P. D. Cummins, *A Time to be Born,* which was produced by the B.B.C. at Christmas, has now been issued as a booklet (Deane and Sons, 2s. 6d.). The stage directions conclude with a masterly touch: "The curtain falls on a triumphant burst of sound that makes us feel that we ourselves are singing."

Amateur theatrical groupings need not be too ambitious to select *A Time to be Born* for their Christmas production. But they will need to be ambitious indeed if they prefer to tackle any of the three pieces by John Pridhoe that are published with the title *The Reflected Star and other Plays* (Peter Russell). The noted Pantiles Players of Tunbridge Wells have acted them all, and very successfully. They are written in free verse, a splendid challenge to an amateur company with intelligence as well as enthusiasm.

Lyrical Meditations on the Paradiso, by Georgina Grace Moncrieff, (Moray

Press, Edinburgh, 10s. 6d.), will have a special interest for readers of our late President's version of Dante's great poem. And how little there is that is new under the sun is vividly illustrated by A. J. Arberry's *Moorish Poetry*, (Cambridge University Press, 18s.). Professor Arberry has translated an anthology of "small masterpieces" first compiled more than seven hundred years ago! They read as though they were written no earlier than last year.

TOWARDS PARNASSUS
PREMIUM COMPETITION: REPORT

(New Series, No. 16)

By KATHLEEN RICHARDSON

I have been on a great many journeys with various companions. Some clutched me tightly by the hand and told me the colours of the sunset; some paused to explain Life to me (and we lost our way); some forsook me when the path became overset with brambles; some read me something from a poet they admired; some hurried on with never a backward glance to see if I was following. Of all these, I prefer the last.

They leave me free, and the test of their quality is my determination to go after them though they stumble or travel the longest way round. My chosen companions have seen a picture worth sharing whether it is almost underfoot or dimly perceptible on a difficult height. They may describe but do not explain it to me; they seek the exact word, the creative image. If they use rhyme, they do not insult my ears with doggerel nor my intelligence with the obvious. Should the journey be an amusing one, they keep the bubble flying ahead of us. A bubble bursting in the face can be as daunting as a custard pie.

I am dividing this award between two sharply contrasted companions — Mark Bourne, of Montgomeryshire, and E. Royse Pritchard, of Birmingham. From both journeys I emerged grateful for fresh experience. "Oasis" contains one cockney rhyme and a line here and there which seemed to me below the level of the rest: nevertheless, this poem has unity and great beauty of imagery. "The Human Sacrifice", despite a certain slickness of technique (and there are worse things) is verse which succeeds in being compassionate without sentimentality.

I felt that I might enjoy another walk with Frank Dossetor, of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire: his "turbaned cedars" had freshness. Before leaving, I cast a rather wistful glance at Phillipa Berlyn, of Salisbury, South Rhodesia, whose short poem, "The African Child" might have given me a pretty problem in division but for the "gloom-moon" rhyme in the first verse; and also at Denis Miles, whose good right ear knew not what his left was undoing.

OASIS

MARK BOURNE

What breath of all the breathless things unpent
Is incarnated in this blowing scent:
Thick heliotrope or where the censer swings:
That pungence where a smoking idol flings
Away men's offerings: or where persists
An orchard's cider scent: where wine-rinsed fists
Steeped long with pressing, weary of the juice:
Or where a pitch-pine's frankincense is loose
Like a soft sleeve upon the night wind's arm.
Or most, that sugared breath beneath a palm,
Where, outward, all around, stares neutral steppe,
Where everything is lost and void, and yet
Has focus in the fragrance of the wells
In this one place as though the earth rebels,
Distilling the stagnating salty miles
Into the attar of the gold date-piles,
Into the greens and scents of beating life;
The essence in the husk by time's long knife
Rived open, its whole kernel-smell to throw
Above the dunes and through the troughs below.
  What know we but out there must somewhere lie
A presence underneath a copper sky?
A soft oasis, a full well perhaps;
A thirstless deep where water-fragrance laps;
Where in the width there is a point of rest;
For some a pool or yet a well far west;
For some the hope the waste might bloom one night;
For some the hope the starless way might light;
For some to see the more of, some the less;
Some just a leading dune there, footprintless;
Others the trackway rutted deep by more,
And all yet drifting to a place before.
  How different from his what I would gain,
Yet to the speckled waste all turn again,
Seeing beyond the tract that one—one knows
The pale blot that to such oasis grows
As shades would break the desert's torture sphere,
As scents would lull the sterile abyss-fear.
  What loneliness would wilt if by were those;
Who would not pierce the abyss for the rose?

As I who watch the depth-blue palms defy
The incandescence underneath the sky,
Still beckoning as blanched the sand-shades fall,
Still in the shimmering a breath's faint call,
Still the far stir I know is breathed for me,
Dim wonders on the rim of ecstasy?
  Let me stand still, and the white distance through,
Let wave the farthest palms that shelter you.
Let a pale scent beat through the burning now,
And hope utter a tearless word somehow.
And after this is ended let me run
Still up to that horizon bled by sun
Knowing where still the place was in the plain
And knowing that the palms could stand again.

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE

E. ROYSE PRITCHARD

She stands and idly drifts her feet
From kerb to gutter, back to kerb;
To everything that happens now
Her face is blindly set.
Her hand is holding pamphlets and
Around her neck a board is hung
To tell the people passing by
That God is waiting yet.

The country town is gaily dressed
For carnival and crowds are here
To taste the heady fun or see
The beauty of this street.
The April sun cascades its light
On foaming clouds and pigeons' wings,
And trees among the shops are snowing
Blossom on the feet.

Her face is one that Nature moulds
In each ten thousand tests of skill,
And if her mouth could form a smile
It would be exquisite.
Her body is a subtle blend
Of graded steel and gossamer,
Her legs so fraught with dancing that
One marvels they submit.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR POETS

A NEW PRIZE-ANTHOLOGY

The Poetry Society is about to inaugurate a yearly or bi-yearly Anthology of Prize Verse. Poets everywhere are invited to submit a Poem for possible inclusion.

The Editors of the Anthology, whose names will be announced presently, are to judge the quality of the various poems submitted in accordance with the terms of an Alice Hunt Bartlett bequest. The late Mrs. Bartlett, one-time American Editor of *The Poetry Review*, empowered her Executors to arrange for this open Prize Competition for Members of the Society. Rules and instructions will be published in our next issue — postponed so that poets can start the New Year well!

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN POETRY AWARD

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, a deep lover of poetry and a distinguished American, a new and substantial annual Award is offered to poets in any part of the world.

A prize of Twenty Pounds will be given for the best poem in English. It must be original, previously unpublished, and not longer than thirty-two lines. There is no restriction in the choice of subject and poetic form.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. One poem only must be submitted by any one poet, and all entries typewritten. The manuscript must be sent anonymously, with the author's name and address accompanying it in a sealed envelope. No MSS. can be returned. Closing date for the first year's award is 31st December, 1953.

The outer envelope must be addressed to "Albert Ralph Korn Award, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., England."

LILIAN BOWES LYON POETRY AWARD

To honour the memory of the late Lilian Bowes Lyon it is The Poetry Society's privilege to invite the submission of original verse by Scottish poets anywhere in the world. Prizes of £5, £3, and £2 will be awarded annually for those poems considered most felicitous, and it is hoped that a selection from the entries may be read publicly.

No poem must exceed thirty lines: dialect is not barred, although the non-Scottish reader must be taken into consideration by the author — the judges will certainly do so— and the competitor's name and address must accompany the MS, but separately in a sealed envelope. Closing date for the second year's award is 30th June, 1954, and entries must be addressed to Prize Award (Lilian Bowes Lyon), The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE

ORIOLE (The Poets Group of the Poetry Society) offer an annual prize of £5 each year for a different subject, any length. Competitors are required to adopt a pseudonym. This should be written in block capitals on the manuscript and also on a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address which must accompany every entry. No Competitor may enter more than one poem.

See next issue for 1954 subject. Do not enclose stamps as manuscripts are not returnable. Closing date 31st July, 1954. Address to: ORIOLE PRIZE, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st December, 1953.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1953

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fifth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10, which is generously offered each year by the Marquess of Queensbury, may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator. The winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1954. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1953

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*.

Closing date is 31st December, 1953.

POET'S PLEASURE

NEWS FROM THE CENTRES

By the Editorial Staff

For once our Reports from Everywhere are prefaced by a quotation from a poem:

Know ye not, dogs, that there are hills and valleys,
Cool streamlets sparkling in the summer sun,
Wide boundless spaces, heather-covered moorlands?
There ye shall bark for joy, and run — and run!

These lines are to be found in a poem entitled "Poor Human Dogs" — it is addressed to those who are suffering under present-day conditions in Europe — and the author is Kathleen M. Chapin, of the Romford Poetry Centre, Essex. Miss Chapin is one of the contributors to an anthology of Romford verse, published by the Centre. There are twenty-four contributors, including the compiler, Mr. Thomas Astore, and a foreword has been written for the book by a grandson of Lord Tennyson. Miss Chapin's poem may be read in full on page 463 of this issue.

ROMFORD

All this suggests, as a local newspaper puts it, that "although little has been heard of the Centre by the general public, its members have shown considerable enthusiasm and enterprise". The representative of the same newspaper was "much impressed" at a recent meeting by the "splendid selection of the readers which demonstrated the versatility of the poets".

No better example than this of Romford could be offered to the other Centres up and down the country — several countries — which are now at the beginning of a new season.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

"Surely the most kindly and courteous poet now writing," the hon. secretary of this Centre declares, is Walter de la Mare! Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens reports that Mr. de la Mare has written to them "not for the first time". In his latest letter he says: "Being so venerable now (if only according to the Calendar) does not make it the least bit less pleasant to have been remembered by your Centre."

From this, and splendid lectures by Mr. Kenneth Lillington in May and August, the poets and friends of poetry at the Surrey Centre of which Mr. Wilfrid Gibson is President, have derived great encouragement as they prepare for their autumn activities. Mr. Lillington spoke about Henry Vaughan, the seventeenth-century Silurist, richly proving how great he was. The lecturer traced the influence of George Herbert, and gave the audience a desire to read and study this religious poet much more deeply for themselves. He also lectured — brilliantly — on the young War poet, Sidney Keyes.

Once a month the Centre meets, usually on the third Thursday. Mrs. Gittens, of 28 Oaklands Drive, welcomes enquiries.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

A visit from Sir Eugen Millington-Drake was greatly enjoyed by this South-coast Centre, and the President, Mr. P. E. Dunn writes: "I am wondering if the Society could send a representative to speak to us some time during the next year."

Yes, indeed. Meetings are held every third Saturday in the month at 3.15. With characteristic hospitality it is announced that tea follows. The meeting-place is Guildry House, 47 Marine Parade, Brighton, Sussex.

The address of the President of the Centre, Mr. Dunn, is 75 Hartfield Avenue, Brighton, 6. Other officers are: Mr. G. W. M. Boycott, Hon. Treasurer, "Twemlow", James Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex, and Miss K. G. Boycott, the Hostess, has the same address.

Mrs. T. Weston Ramsey (a revered name) and the Rev. F. Pratt Green are Vice-Presidents. Brighton Centre will take some beating by any other Centre with ambitions to be regarded as the most go-ahead organization in the provinces.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

One of the happiest events in the life of this fine Centre is the annual outing on a day in May to Stratford-upon-Avon for a visit to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and, of course, a play. Mrs. Van den Bergh, Little Basing, Bray, Berks. would tell you all about it, and also about the monthly meetings at different members' houses. Two meetings each

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ROBERT GRAVES
Poems 1953

"Eleven years ago I published a study of contemporaries, called *Eight for Immortality*, in which I dared to prophesy that the eight poets whom I had discussed would survive fashion and become immortal. Graves was one of them. His subsequent work has not shaken my belief." RICHARD CHURCH, *John O'London's Weekly*.★

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year are held in High Wycombe, and the public are invited. The member of the Editorial Staff who is shaping this paragraph would like to add — "And how good and heartening these open meetings are!"

BURGESS HILL

At the annual General Meeting in March Mr. H. C. Romeril was elected to the Presidency and Mrs. Lake to the Hon. Treasurership. The Centre meets at 3.15 on the second Saturday of each of the six months beginning with October — at F. G. Lambert's Corner House Restaurant, 45 Church Road.

HAMPSTEAD

"Seaside and Country" was the theme of the first July meeting at this London Centre in the North-west. The season ended in the middle of the month with a "Members' Choice" Reading, and October 1st is the date of the autumn re-assembly. Meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays at 14 Eldon Grove, by invitation of Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins. "In Country and on Sea", "Autumn and Harvest", "Wind and Weather", "Music and Songs" are the first four lectures, beginning October 1. No meetings December and January.

IPSWICH

This go-ahead Suffolk Centre has solved the problem of how to keep members together during the out-of-doors season. The May meeting was held at a delightful hotel in Copdock, near Ipswich, where members read their own and other poems. Then in June the gathering assembled at Great Ruffins, Wickham Bishops, Essex, by invitation of Mrs. Hudson, whose late husband founded the Suffolk Poetry Club before the Second World War.

"This was to have been a garden meeting," writes Miss K. M. Turner, the enthusiastic hon. secretary, (address: 18 Willoughby Road, Ipswich), but the weather was unkind, and the meeting was held indoors, where tea was provided for twenty-four members and friends.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL, AND DISTRICT

And now for an apology and a correction. The meetings at this Centre are held once a fortnight, not once a month — we had misread the hon. secretary's report. The news that there was "an attendance of thirteen" at the second meeting suggested that although it was held at "a private house" ("Belclare", Old Town, Bexhill) the poets and friends of poetry in the neighbourhood would be welcome to future gatherings even if they do not take place in public rooms. We trust they still would be. Exception seems to have been taken to our exhortation to "South-coasters" as a fair-ground phrase. So, meekly and with bowed heads, we add only that the hon. secretary is I. K. Bateman, Esq., of Ochiltree House, Hastings.

LEICESTER

It is our pleasure to put on record that this young Centre in the Midlands is already taking big strides. Following the successful inaugural lecture on May 9th by our Editorial colleague, Kennedy Williamson, on "The Epithet in Poetry", the programme developed so that a recital by Mrs. Dorothy Sigsworth, a discussion on "The Significance of Poetry", introduced by Mr. Smith, an undergraduate of Leicester University College, and a recital by Miss Evelyn Brown from the poetry of A. Gascoigne Richards, who was present, were enthusiastically welcomed between May and July.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A special tribute is hereby paid to Miss Hettie Haddock, who has acted as hon. secretary (by herself or with another member of the Committee), since the foundation of this Centre, and it is largely due to her hard work and enthusiasm over a number of years that the Centre is in such a flourishing condition to-day.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.)

A voice from America. "We are delighted that one of our members, Laura Bedell of Bloomfield, Ontario, Canada, has won a place in the Oriole Group competition. And now Ruth Crary, Marie T. Phillips, and the Canadians too. So glad!"

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EDMUND BLUNDEN

writes: In your poem I was able to find a retreat from many commonplace facts and concerns . . .

At least my best thanks for the music and the intimations. (Jan. 6, 1953).

What a generous letter. Once again the noble influence of Poetry is emphasized. However local the inspiration of a poem, no poet, no reader of poetry, can be less than national and international in his appreciation of it or his desire for it.

TORONTO (CANADA)

The latest report from this great Canadian city goes back as far as last Christmas — or even earlier, if we are to mention "A Comparative Study of Some British, Canadian, and Contemporary American Poets," an autumn programme "designed to stimulate interest in contemporary poets, and encourage members to read, discuss, and compare the works of poets of three different English-speaking nations."

The theme of the Christmas meeting was "The Spirit of Christmas, Old and New", covering early English poetry from 1400, the nineteenth century, and the present day. The speakers were: Professor J. W. Scrivin, and Rev. Clinton D. Cross. Professor Adrian Macdonald spoke in January on "Wordsworth and his Womenfolk".

The meetings were held during the 1952-53 season, "in spite," says the report, "of difficult winter problems of transportation from a distance."

* * * * *

And so to the new season . . . Following is our Directory of Centres not included above.

BRONDESBURY:—Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address — Telephone: WIL 6405.

CHELSEA POETRY CIRCLE (Affiliated to The Poetry Society):—Hon. Secretary, 5 Redesdale Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.):—*President:* Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill., U.S.A.

DUMFRIES:—Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.):—*President General:* Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, PA., U.S.A.

GLOUCESTER:—Miss Katharine N. James, 4 Beaufort Buildings, Gloucester. Tel. 23657.

GUILDFORD:—Mrs. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford, Surrey.

KENSINGTON:—Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

MANCHESTER:—Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. B. Sterling, 25 June Street, Manchester 13. Meetings at Fearnley House, 3 St. Ann's Churchyard, Manchester, the third Wednesday in each month at 6.30 p.m.

NOTTINGHAM:—Enquiries should be sent to Mrs. W. M. Riley, 20 Medina Drive, Tollerton, Nottingham.

REIGATE:—Meetings monthly at The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate. Enquiries to Mrs. M. A. Hicks.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.):—*President:* Helen T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street North, St. Petersburg 6, Florida.

SHEFFIELD:—Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

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6.	Joyce Grenfell	Sonnet
7.	Joyce Grenfell	A morning William Morris might have known
8.	Stephen Graham	A Face
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10.	William Kean Seymour	So Sceptical my Heart
11.	Arthur Vivian	Horatian Night Piece
12.	Arthur Vivian	Hope, Death and Immortality
13.	Terence Heywood	Winter Jasmine
14.	Geoffrey Johnson	Mystery
15.	Doris Major	Spring Carol

The Gen. Sec., The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, W.1.

AUTUMN FRIDAYS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

"The Battle for Beauty is Never Finally Won"

Here is the list of Programmes for October, November and December, Friday evenings, 6-30 to 7-30 at 33 Portman Square. Members 1s. Non-Members 2s. (Members, bring a Non-Member!).

October	2	"Our Own Poets". Dr. Marie Stopes, Thomas Moult, William Kean Seymour, J. Redwood Anderson. Chairman, Stephen Graham. (Arranged by Violet Adamson).
	9	Hilaire Belloc: Memorial Reading. Readers: Kelty MacLeod and Wilton Cole. Chairman, Father Dom Ambrose Agius, O.S.B.
	16	*The Poetry Review*, Discussion Night. Readers' opinions invited by The Editorial Board. Chairman, Thomas Moult.
	23	"From My Anthology." Readers: Marjorie Woodall, Howieson Culff.
	30	Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, K.C.M.G. "Poetry from The Seychelles".
November	6	"Repetition as a Dramatic Device in Poetry." Lecture by Kennedy Williamson, M.A., F.R.S.L. of the Editorial Board.
	13	Play Reading. "Shadow of The Glen" by J. M. Synge, "The Pot o' Broth" by W. B. Yeats and "Don Juan in Decline" by Kathleen V. Richardson. (Arranged by Charles Doran).
	20	Ealing Circle Night, with readers from The Ealing Group. (Arranged by Mary Giles).
	27	Miss Mollie Hudson and Students of The Guildhall School of Music.
December	4	A Poetry Brains Trust. (Arranged by John Graddon). Please send your questions in good time.
	11	"Poems of The Sea and The Land". Readers: Kelty MacLeod, Duncan MacIntyre.
	18	Seven Days to Christmas: Scenes from Nativity Plays. (Arranged by Charles Doran).

PORTMAN SQUARE — FIN DE SAISON

In this extraordinary summer of splendour and monsoon, with a torrent of traffic dammed-up almost to our doors, the audiences at our Friday Readings maintained their good Coronation level and were rewarded by many reminders of our golden heritage, both from Dominion and British poetry.

The quiet green pool of the library, with the six-thirty out-of-town spate rushing by below, made an excellent setting for Geraldine Kalka-Cash's fine poem, "The Estuary" still fresh and salty on re-acquaintance. An experiment in anagrams, linked to the language of trees, was another interesting piece of hers in the Australian programme. New Zealand's personified voice was Lorna Finlayson, and the readers were Sybil Westland and Terence Bayler (holder of the New Zealand Exhibition at R.A.D.A.). Roy Campbell is still baiting bulls, so his place was taken most satisfyingly by Roy McNabb, with Olive Gregg and Dr. Vera Buchanan Gould reading for South Africa with authentic feeling and authority.

These rounded off the Commonwealth Series . . .

It seemed essential, in this very special summer, to include some kind of survey of English poetry and though an hour is quite inadequate to remind and discover, the arrangers did their work skilfully, choosing high-lights rather than hidden jewels. Charles Doran was in his element among the Elizabethans, and mercifully gave us "episodes played" rather than "speeches from" when Shakespeare had perforce to appear as one of many in this period.

Lesley Deane was in charge of Jacobean and Restoration poets, and John Chandos, with Tony Van den Bergh in the chair, recalled to us that Gray, that purest gem of ray serene, is as full of quotable flashes as Hamlet. How pleasant it was to be read *to*

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and not *at* in Mr. Chandos's delightful voice; dry for Byron, romantic for Shelley.

Mr. Wilton Cole, with the able assistance of Miss Winifred Habershon and Miss Kathleen Penny, culled (a verb of the period, after all) from the dear familiar Victorians. In a moment of inspiration Mr. Cole added the ballad "Fol de rol de rally-o", sharp in contrast and a perfect exposition of the dramatic impact lurking within the apparently meaningless refrain.

At the end there were leavetakings, and a breaking-up-for-the-holidays atmosphere came over us, tinged with a little regret perhaps for the poetry that must lie quietly awaiting the first chills of autumn and a whirl of leaves in the Square. We recall sadly that Hilaire Belloc left us this summer and one of our early Readings in the autumn list will commemorate him. More Member Poets will be heard; among them our President whose modesty has at last succumbed to extreme importunity. Kelty MacLeod and Duncan McIntyre are to give us poems of the Sea and Land, including a selection from the work of Robert Frost, to whom this number of *Poetry Review* is so seasonably dedicated.

K.V.R.

POET'S PROGRESS

Report on the Forty-fourth Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society.

The Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society was held at 33 Portman Square on 27th May, 1953.

The President opened the Meeting, welcoming Members to the discussion.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were signed and confirmed as correct.

The President's Report: After reminding the members that this was the first occasion in which he had taken the chair in office at an Annual Meeting, the President paid tribute to the "twenty or thirty" ladies and gentlemen who regularly turn aside from the world of "getting and spending" to help in the battle for Beauty which is untiringly waged by the Society. Reviewing a year of ups and downs he reported that on the whole it had been one of great encouragement. Especially did he refer to the Auditions, the Friday Readings, the Children's Saturday afternoons, the Society's two quarterlies, and the propaganda work away from Portman Square and abroad, notably by Sir Eugen Millington-Drake in France and Africa. "What a lot of labour, hard but joyous, these represent behind the scenes!"

Reference was also made to the Presidential Appeal to Vice-Presidents, Life Members, and Honorary Members, which was proving fruitful. Plans for the future were outlined, and the Meeting responded with acclamation to his call for a show of appreciation of the various workers, particularly the Office Staff, Miss Cracroft and Miss Begley, and not forgetting the Housekeeper, Mrs. Price.

The Hon. Treasurer's Report: The Hon. Treasurer opened his remarks saying that there was a great improvement and new inspiration in the Society due to the influence of the President in his first year of office, which was obvious already. He hoped that the improvement would remain with the Society for a very long time to come. He thanked the President on behalf of the Society for his great and devoted efforts over the past year.

Referring to The Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Accounts he said that the deficit for 1952 amounted to £534 9s. 11d. which was a substantial reduction on the previous year from £1,376. Great efforts in economy had been made and the expenditure had been curtailed by more than £700. He said that the Membership of the Society continued to cause anxiety.

Referring to Income he said that the Auditions continued to increase and the amount of £3,629 shown for 1952 was the highest on record. He thanked the Examiners and Teachers for their loyal support over the past year and particularly Miss Cracroft for her able management of the Auditions.

The Hon. Treasurer then paid tribute to the Auditors, Messrs. Godwin & Taylor, for their management of the accounts of the Society, and their unfailing service. He formally moved that the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Society be adopted.

The General Secretary was instructed on behalf of the Members and G.C. of the Society to address a letter of congratulation and loyal greetings to the Queen on the occasion of her Coronation.

For their work on behalf of the Society a vote of thanks to The President and Hon. Treasurer and the outgoing Council was warmly applauded.